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Isabella Glyn.

THE
DUCHESS OF MALFI;

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

BY JOHN WEBSTER, 1612.

RE-CONSTRUCTED FOR STAGE REPRESENTATION,

BY R. H. HORNE,

AUTHOR OF "COSMO DE MEDICI," "GREGORY VII.," "THE
DEATH OF MARLOWE," ETC.

AS PRODUCED AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL, SADLER'S WELLS,

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PREFACE.

WHEN I first conceived the idea of bringing the *DUCHESS OF MALFI* upon the modern stage, I thought that a considerable reduction of its length, by the erasure of a number of unnecessary scenes, and a little revision of certain objectionable passages, would be nearly sufficient. But, before I had got half through the first act, the futility of such a course became sufficiently apparent. Still I hoped to accomplish the task, with due reverence to a work which I considered the most powerful of any tragedy not in Shakspeare, and equal in *that* quality even to him. For, if the two chief elements of tragic power be terror and pity, assuredly both of these are carried to the highest degree in the *DUCHESS OF MALFI*.

The more, however, I examined the structure of the tragedy the more manifest did it become, that the only way to render it available to the stage must be that of re-constructing the whole, cutting away all that could not be used, and filling up the gaps and chasms.

Nor was this all that it required. The contradictions, incongruities, and oversights were of a kind that exceeded anything I had previously conjectured. In truth, until I came to scrutinize the scenes thus closely, I had overlooked these discrepancies as well as the author, and others have done. Let me give an instance. Antonio sends off his friend Delio, post-haste to Rome on a service of most vital importance; and the next time they meet on Delio's return, Antonio has forgotten all about it. Again: after the Duchess (in Act IV., Scene I., of the original) has seen, as she believes, her children lying dead in their shrouds—she, in the very next scene, has entirely forgotten this, and gives precise and affecting maternal directions concerning them both, as if they were alive. Several other extraordinary instances might be mentioned, but it would only confuse the mind between the two versions, to specify them, and answer no good purpose.

PREFACE.

It hence became apparent that if this great tragedy was to be exhumed from its comparative obscurity, by representation on the stage, all the characters must be made consistent with themselves, and all the events proper to them—all the parts must be made coherent—and all this be built with direct relationship to the whole, and direct tendency to the final results. Yet, amidst all this the great scenes must be religiously preserved, or I should do worse than nothing, and produce a weak and sacrilegious deformity. What I have, therefore, sought to do, is as though a grand old abbey—haunted, and falling into decay—stood before me, and I had undertaken to re-construct it anew with as much of its own materials as I could use—asking pardon for the rest—but preserving almost entire its majestic halls and archways, its loftiest turrets, its most secret and solemn chambers, where the soul, in its hour of agony, uplifted its voice to God.

Writing this Preface the night before performance, when no one can have certain knowledge of the effect of tragic scenes so awful, and others so new to the stage, I am anxious to record that I do not doubt but this tragedy of Webster's will be worthily acted at Sadler's Wells, not only by Mr. Phelps, Miss Glyn, and Mr. Bennett, but by all principals and seconds in the performance. Be the result what it may, my cordial acknowledgments are due to the careful assiduity, the unwearied energy, and watchfulness with which a tragedy, so long highly-honoured in dramatic literature, has been placed by Mr. Phelps upon the stage—to the pains taken by each performer in the rehearsals—and though I name Mr. T. L. Greenwood last, he stands foremost in his appreciation of the present version of the *DUCHESS OF MALFI*.

In this edition, printed from the prompter's copy, most of the acting directions are allowed to remain, with a view to render the numerous stage difficulties less onerous to future managers.

R. H. H.

MEMOIR OF MISS GLYN.

MISS ISABELLA GLYN is a native of Edinburgh. She was born on 22nd May, 1823. Educated in strictly Presbyterian principles, she was certainly not intended by her parents for the stage. When her inclinations became manifested for it, they were seriously opposed by the religious prejudices of her family. Coming to England, an accident threw her among a party of amateurs, who were engaged in getting-up a performance for the St. James's Theatre, in which Miss Glyn was induced to undertake the leading character. Circumstances afterwards led her to Paris. M. Michelot, of the *Conservatoire*, undertook her education for the French stage. Under his direction, Miss Glyn studied, among others, the parts of *Celime* (*Le Misanthrope*), *Athalie*, *Camille*, and *Emelie*; but returning to England, on account of the health of a sister, her friends, now convinced of her special talent, advised her to remain here, and devote herself exclusively to the English drama.

This was in the year 1846. Her reputation soon spread among literary circles; and she was, accordingly, introduced by her admirers to Mr. Charles Kemble, as a lady of extraordinary histrionic promise. Before that gentleman, she recited the first scene of *Lady Macbeth*, and the chamber scene of *Juliet*. Mr. Kemble expressed himself highly gratified with the recitation, and added that, "whenever she had studied any one of Shakspeare's characters, he would have great pleasure in hearing her through it, on her writing to him the day previous to the desired interview." Miss Glyn, grateful for this kind offer, studied hard, and received from time to time the inestimable benefit of Mr. Kemble's instructions, who now acknowledged her as his pupil.

Such was the interest that Mr. Kemble took in the advancement of his *protégée*, that he was solicitous to interest in her favour Mr. Webster; and indeed it was originally understood

that her *début* was to be made at the Haymarket, on the 1st of October, 1847;—a design, however, which ultimately proved inconsistent with the previous arrangements of the theatre.

On the 8th of the following month, at the instance of Mr. Kemble, a hearing was procured for his pupil at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, in the part of the Lady Constance, in *King John*, and afterwards in those of Lady Macbeth and Hermione. Miss Glyn was honoured on each occasion with the presence of Mr. Kemble, who testified his approbation of the progress she was making.

Being immediately engaged for London, she appeared on Wednesday, 26th of January, 1848, at the Olympic, in Lady Macbeth; and afterwards, in Juliana, in *The Honey Moon*. She then, upon the invitation of Mr. Pritchard, removed to the York Circuit, where, during twelve nights, she acted with great success, in Juliana, Lady Macbeth, Juliet, Portia (*Merchant of Venice*), Queen Katherine, Lady Townly, Beatrice, Katherine (*Taming of the Shrew*), and Rosalind, in *As You Like It*.

Critical opinion was now rising in favour of Miss Glyn as an actress of the severer characters in Shaksperian tragedy. After the retirement of Mrs. Warner from Sadler's Wells, the management of that theatre were in want of a lady to supply her place. Their choice wisely fell upon Miss Glyn. The theatre re-opened on the 27th of September, 1848, with the new actress as Volumnia, in the tragedy of *Coriolanus*. Notwithstanding the nervousness incident to her position, as a young performer, in a new part, on the first night of the season, Miss Glyn made a decided impression, as an artist, with first-rate claims on the attention of the public.

It may here be mentioned that Miss Glyn is a brunette, of a commanding height, well-proportioned figure, and powerfully expressive features. Her eyes are large and dark, and she has a prominent intellectual forehead. With such advantages of person, she is peculiarly suited for the more majestic characters of tragedy. The impression made by her Volumnia was afterwards more than confirmed by Hermione, in *The Winter's Tale*, on the 16th of October. Of these plays, the first had a

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run of sixteen, and the last of twenty-one nights. On the 11th of November, Miss Glyn also appeared in *Belvidera*. The tragedy had been put up merely for the sake of introducing Mr. C. K. Dickenson as Jaffier; but such was the actress's excellence in the heroine, that its repetition was called for. A tableau which she executed with Jaffier, on the tolling of the fatal bell for Pierre's execution, was, in particular, an artistic point that reminded the old play-goer of Mrs. Siddons and Charles Kemble. A greater triumph, however, was reserved by the revival of *Henry VIII.*, in the difficult and commanding character of Queen Katherine. Miss Glyn's deportment at the trial scene, reproduced the celebrated pictorial representation of Mrs. Siddons; while her entire management of the dying scene was both poetic in its conception, and supernatural in its manner. After her brief and visionary slumber, nothing could be finer than her mode of apostrophizing the retiring spirits. Had this performance taken place at either of the large metropolitan theatres in the palmy days of the drama, it would at once have established Miss Glyn's reputation as the leading star of the day.

As it was, no doubt now existed among competent judges but that a great actress had been brought on the stage. The management put the matter to the test by producing, on the 29th of January, 1849, the tragedy of *King John*, with Miss Glyn for the Lady Constance. Miss Glyn's third act, where she "instructs her sorrows to be proud," throws herself on the ground, and then rises to vituperate the "cowardly Austria," was marked with majesty, power, and pathos, such as had not been recently witnessed. Her subsequent sense of maternal bereavement and mental alienation, with her sorrow and despair, were finely contrasted with the grandeur and intensity of her scorn. Her emotion and passion frequently rose to the terrible.

Her next step was of still greater significance; the character of Margaret of Anjou, in the Shaksperian (not Cibber's) *Richard III.* The ideal that Miss Glyn had evidently formed of the part, was not that of a vulgar cursing shrew, but a veritable prophetess—a majestic being endowed with supernatural

powers. It is remarkable that all Margaret's denunciations are fulfilled, and she herself, in her second scene, proclaims their true accomplishment in evidence of her inspiration. The marvellous and the terrible were accordingly combined in the actress's conception; in their delivery she was nothing less than the self-conscious Pythoness, rejoicing in the realization of her vaticinations. The stern and heroic were never more solemnly, more effectively embodied. She manifestly towered above all the other characters on the stage; and it seemed as if the persons of the scene tolerated her presence with a sort of shuddering dread, and shrunk most when most her awfulness condescended to become familiar, and temporarily stooped to the level of vulgar mortals.

It was not until the 12th of September that Miss Glyn was called upon to assume a new part,—Portia, in *The Merchant of Venice*,—one well suited to the classical breadth of her style, and which, indeed, she invests with a natural charm peculiarly her own. Miss Glyn, in this character, permits the womanly nature to break through—a very important particular to which too little attention is usually paid. On the 19th of the same month, also, she gave to Isabella, in *Measure for Measure*, a highly-coloured and passionate interpretation, remarkable for its originality and force; and on the 6th of the next, she supported the part of Emilia, in *Othello*, with extraordinary effect.

Now approached the most arduous of her attempts. Shakspeare's marvellous tragedy of *Antony and Cleopatra* was produced on the 22nd of October, with costly decorations and careful rehearsal. Everything in this wonderful drama is treated after "the high Roman fashion," and the whole of the plot has an epic dignity and elevation. The representation of Cleopatra herself has been reckoned one of the impossibilities of the histrionic art. Miss Glyn, however, with her characteristic energy, grappled with its difficulties, and succeeded to admiration. She aimed at the infinite variety of the heroine's character, and impersonated it, in some respects, to a marvel. Her death-scene with the asp at her bosom was quoted as being equal to Pasta; the glory that irradiated her counte-

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nance at the glad thought that she should meet her "curled Antony" in the shades, was strikingly sublime.

The high comedy displayed by Miss Glyn in the early scenes of Cleopatra, suggested her making the trial of a mixed character,—one blending elevated comedy with poetry. That of Julia, in Knowles's *Hunchback*, was accordingly assigned her on the 22nd of November. The trial was altogether successful. None since Miss Fanny Kemble had prospered so well in the delineation of the country maiden become town lady.

This eventful year in Miss Glyn's theatrical life closed with her embodying a part in a new tragedy, that of the Countess in Mr. Tomlins' interesting play of *Garcia*, to which she gave a due importance, and a dignity quite remarkable.

During the remainder of the season, Miss Glyn sustained in succession the parts of Mrs. Beverley, in *The Gamester*; Donna Alda, in *Calagnos*; Queen Katherine, in *Henry VIII.*; Alice Raby, in Mr. George Bennett's new and successful play of *Retribution*; and Lady Macbeth. The last character, in which she appeared on the 20th of March, 1850, gave to the critic the opportunity of testing her progress since her *début* at the Olympic. The power of tone and colour which had been added to a skill in outline always admirable, was truly astonishing. The improvement actually made was immense, but by degrees, which, being almost nightly exhibited in public, were not so marked as they would have been if the actress had been awhile withdrawn from a London audience. The reproduction of her in this character afforded to the critic something like the means of measurement, and the result proved how hard the artist must in the interval have worked, both as a dramatic student and an actress.

The part of Isabella, in Southern's fine domestic tragedy so named, has been traditionally referred to, as the professional test of the power of a great actress. At the latter end of the month, Miss Glyn undertook it, and achieved a remarkable triumph. This she farther corroborated about the middle of April, by the assumption of Bianca, in Mr. Milman's tragedy of *Fazio*. The fearful energy with which she depicted the emotions of jealousy and rage, developed in her attributes of

physical force which had been previously little suspected. She closed the season with the part of Lady Randolph, in *Douglas*, which, though she performed it with tenderness and dignity, must be looked upon rather as a rehearsal than a finished performance.

It was with great judgment that Miss Glyn had deferred the manifestation of physical energy to the close of her second season. Up to this time she had aimed at a correct and statuesque outline, informed with metaphysical power, and interpreted by mental indications rather than by material forces.

So many successful assumptions of the greatest dramatic characters, by one individual, in so short a space of time, is, we believe, without precedent in theatrical annals. The result is, no doubt, greatly owing to the excellent teaching which Miss Glyn has received from Mr. Charles Kemble, and the opportunities for development given by the vigorous and intelligent management of Sadler's Wells, where she has exhibited before the public the growth and progress of her talent. The mind of Miss Glyn, as an artist, is happily yet plastic. There is *growth*, as we have said, and progress—therefore life.

To the long list of characters already enumerated, Miss Glyn has added, during the present season, that of Ginevra, in Mr. Leigh Hunt's *Legend of Florence*. She has also repeated some of her great parts, such as Volumnia, Lady Macbeth, and Beatrice.

The two last, from the perfection to which they have attained, have recently excited much critical attention. Her Lady Macbeth is pronounced to be the very finest we now have upon the stage. To great individuality of outline, there has been added a force of colouring, and a breadth of detail in the filling-up, almost unprecedented. The sleep-walking scene is a psychological study.

The tone and tendency of Miss Glyn's mind are of the masculine order: her intellectual energies are of extraordinary strength. The leading feature of her private character is a strong sense of independence and honour. Her life is passed

exclusively in the study and practice of her art. Hence the eminence in it to which she has so speedily attained. The fame which she has won, she has *earned*. Her excellence as an artist is based upon principles: each new character she personates is only a new application of them.

The possession by one and the same artist of tragic and comic power is both a rare and great advantage. The comedy of Miss Glyn is not the condescension of a great actress willing to stoop on occasion from her tragic elevation;—but it is as natural and genuine a gift as that of Nisbett or Vestris. It indeed bears a startling and wonderful resemblance to the comedy of the latter, with as wonderful differences. It has a similar sort of *naïveté* and shrewdness—but with an occasional depth of tone, which only a tragic artist can give. Nevertheless, it has no exaggeration—no farcical breadth. For the most part, it is a special peculiarity, such as at the Adelphi or Lyceum would be speculated on by the playwright, and written to, in order to bring it out in full force. Such as it is, it will benefit the actress greatly, and give variety to her assumption of mixed characters, relieving the intensity of the more painful situations, and by the intermixture of vivacity bringing them again within the limits of pleasure,—the true sphere of Shaksperian art. In character, it is essentially Doric;—there is no conventionality about it;—it lies close to nature and originality. In a word, it is the comedy not of any peculiar class, but of all. It is generic, and its truth is therefore universal, and uniformly successful. By the easiest means, Miss Glyn secures the laugh; but more frequently the smile.

The prospect of a revival of the Kemble school of acting, such as Miss Glyn has undoubtedly the power to accomplish, is of the highest importance to Histrionic Art. It is as an *art* that the drama, on the stage, should be studied. But too few opportunities have been given to individuals so to study it. Miss Glyn has passed her novitiate under the highest auspices. To fine genius on her own part, she has in addition enjoyed unequalled advantages. Continued practice in the greatest characters, on a public stage, have now secured to the fair artist the fullest facility of execution. Meanwhile, the

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entire course of her engagements has been under the most enlightened direction; thus securing her from the manifold errors that inevitably accompany self-tuition. But that which has mainly rendered the success of Miss Glyn triumphant, has been her extraordinary power of characterization. Each part she has performed has had its distinct individuality. Imagination to invent, and intellect to combine, are the highest faculties in all art; and these Miss Glyn has exhibited in more than usual force. It is to be hoped that her example may lead others, by similar means, to aim at histrionic success: and these means are, intense study, continued diligence, and undivided attention to the one pursuit.

J. A. H.

PROLOGUE.

BY R. H. HORNE.

To those whose hopes are greyer than the Age,
And have no strength to turn another page;—
To those, who contemplate the moving skies,
Yet see no promise in their auguries;—
To those, who think a downward rolling stone
Must reach the bottom—and so, *help* it down;—
To those, who see the round of human things,
Like the mill-horse who never dreams of wings,
All great designs advancing to a goal,
Fill them with doubts that paralyze the soul!
The poet's fiery Pegasus appears,
Madness—to them his wings are but long ear ;
And for the disbeliever in a cause,
There are no signs and tokens, reasons, laws ; }
His facts and figures prove all eagles, daws, }

Arise—advance!—or must we groan and sigh
In old arm-chairs, while all the rest *steam* by!
All else progressing,—drove, and shoal, and flock,
Shall *we* remain—an old shell on a rock,
And the great elements of human passion
Succumb to foreign tastes—to farce and fashion ?
Shall we be told, that in a barbarous age
The mirror held to nature's face and page }
Was a gross taste, for which we are too sage ? }
No : let us rather say our Drama stands
On lasting truths, and not on shifting sands.

Now do we see—through laurels not yet won—
Two paths of light—each leading to the sun :—
The first our ancient Drama, rough and great,
Mighty in passion, full of strength and weight ;
Our fathers' these, founded so deep in nature,
So absolute in each essential feature,
That no emasculated forms can take
The second place—they're of a different make—
An ancient giant to a modern rake!
Wherefore the only second path appears
For those who can uplift their fathers' spears—
Whirl them on high—strike home, and take their place
The true *legitimate* sons of that great race !

See, how the glorious earth, in ether space,
Spins off her years with the same youthful face ;
But as she spins, progresses round the sun,
Labour of love whose work is never done !

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The sun himself, his planets and his peers,
Circling some vaster centre of all spheres :
All *these* again in harmony combine—
Moving for ever, somewhere—by design !

The tree that hath no hope can bear no fruit :
Must stars come down to teach the oak its root ?
Show how eternal nature in the earth
From light and air claims a perennial birth ;
That while the heart of man remains the same,
The Drama bears within a constant flame,
Ready to light our progress, onward ever,
When *truth* and *power* combine in that endeavour ;
Ready to re-illuminate its ancient stories,
And weave its brow with *new* and lasting glories !

In our fresh period vigorous life requires
More solid food for its exalting fires ;
Great passions—doings—sufferings, great hopes still,
To urge us up the steep and thorny hill,
Where genius, science, liberty, combined,
Give lasting empire to the advancing mind.
Wherefore, to-night, we bring the inspiring themes
Of great, old Webster,—clad in whose strong beams
We venture forth on the uplifted sea
Of his invention's high-wrought poesy,
Steering to reach the storm-rent beacon tower,
Trusting his hand—and with full faith in power.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

- FERDINAND, *Duke of Calabria, and Lord of Tarragona.*
CARDINAL GRAZIANI, *his brother.*
MALATESTA, *Prince of Albano.*
ANTONIO BOLOGNA, *Steward to the Duchess.*
DELIO, *a friend of Antonio.*
BOSSOLA, *a man of desperate fortune*
SILVIO, *a nobleman of Rome.*
CASTRUCCIO, *an old lord,* } *Courtiers attached to the household*
GRISOLAN. } *of the Duchess.*
PHYSICIAN.
MARINA, *Duchess of Malfi, and sister to Ferdinand and the*
Cardinal.
CARIOLA, *confidential lady attendant on the Duchess.*
GUISEPPA, *a lady of the court, wife of Castruccio.*
THE TWO CHILDREN OF THE DUCHESS.
Executioners, Pages, Lords, Ladies, Servants, Soldiers.

THE DUCHESS OF MALFI.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A Bridge in Malfi, with Gardens beyond.*

Enter ANTONIO and DELIO, R. H.

Del. [*Clapping him on the shoulder.*] Good faith, Antonio
—nay, 'twas passing well!

Thou art a prince of horsemen, by my life!

Ant. I thank your friendship.

Del. Thank my wondering eyes!

I knew thee skilful with thy steed, but ne'er
Dream'd of such Parthian feats. Methought the spear
Behind thee cast, possess'd the gift of sight—
So true it sought the mark.

Ant. After long absence,

I much rejoice that in good season thus
Thou art return'd to Malfi, 'midst these revels
Our royal duchess holds.

Del. [*Taking Ant.'s hand.*] And I—and I.
The duchess, too, finds pleasure in these scenes;
When at full speed she saw thy steady spear
Take off the ring, she look'd on thee—and smiled.

Ant. A truce, my friend—and yet—if thou say'st true,
I joy to know it.

Del. Nay, and she *did* smile.

Ant. Well—well. She oft doth smile on all around her.

Del. Marina is a great lady.

Ant. You say truly.

Del. Report doth paint her brothers with less favour.
How cold and self-absorb'd the duke appeared:
He noticed not the sports.

Ant. Nor aught beside.

His thoughts of himself and his great ancestry,
Descended from the ancient Spanish kings,
Fill the chief part o' the world in his conceit,
And all the rest are made but to admire
The fruitless passion of his pedigree.

Del. Ay, but his meditation seem'd most gloomy;
To what end, think you?

Ant. Nay, I lack all knowledge,
But oft methinks the smile upon his lips
Is but the false reflection of a frown
That darkens o'er his heart.

Del. Then 'tis no sorrow
His visit here in Malfi draws to a close.

Ant. Would he were gone.

Del. But of the cardinal!—they say he's a brave fellow;
will play his five thousand crowns at tennis; dance; court
ladies; one that hath fought single combats.

Ant. Some such flashes superficially hang on him, for form;
but observe his inward character. He is a melancholy church-
man. The spring in his face is but a type of the speckled
plots within him. He should have been Pontiff, but instead
of coming to it by the primitive decency of the church, he did
barter bribes so largely as if he would have carried it away
without heaven's knowledge. He and his brother, the duke,
should have been twins. But for their sister—the right noble
duchess—

You never fixed your eye on three fair medal
Cast in one mould, of temper all so different;
For her discourse, it is so full of rapture,
You only will begin then to be sorry
When she doth end her speech; and *while* she speaks
She throws upon a man so sweet a look,
That it might cause one dance a galliard
That lay in a dead palsy,—and to dote
On that sweet countenance.
Her days are practised in such noble virtue,
That sure her nights, nay, even her very sleeps
Are more in heaven than other ladies' prayers.
Let all sweet ladies break their flattering glasses,
And dress themselves in her.

Del. Now fie, Antonio!

You play the wire-drawer with your commendations.

Ant. [*Devoutly.*] I'll case the picture up.

Del. [*Looking off.*] Here comes the cardinal, and Bossola
Close at his heels!

Ant. What makes he with the cardinal? It seems
You know this Bossola?

Del. I knew him in Padua—a fantastical scholar,
And of no good repute.

Ant. The cardinal turns sharply on his heel!

Del. They come this way. [Ant. and Del. walk up.]

Enter CARDINAL GRAZIANI, R. H., *followed by* BOSSOLA.

Bos. I do haunt you still.

Card. So.

Bos. I have done you better service than to be slighted thus.

Card. You enforce your merit too much.

Bos. I fell into the galleys for an ill deed wrought in your service, where, for two years I wore a couple of towels instead of a shirt, with a knot on the shoulder, after the fashion of a Roman mantle. Slighted thus, I will thrive *some* way.

[*Crosses R.*]

Card. Would you could become honest!

Bos. With all your divinity, lord cardinal, do but direct me the way to it. I have known many travel far for it, and yet return as arrant knaves as they went forth, because they carried themselves always along with them.

[*The Card. gazes with cold scorn at Bos.—turns his back and exit, R. Ant. and Del. come down.*]

Ant. [R.] He hath denied thee some suit?

Bos. [c.] He and his brother, the duke, are like plum-trees that grow crooked over standing pools; they are rich and o'er-laden with fruit, but none but crows, pies, and caterpillars feed on them.

Del. [L.] I fear you rail at those things which you want.

Ant. Have patience, sir; it will advance your merits
More than this spleenful humour.

Bos. Fare-ye-well, sirs.

[*Crosses L.*]

Hold fast your courtly offices—admire

Your own transparent clouds; yet do not scorn me,

For places in the court are but like beds

I' the pauper's hospital, where this man's head

Lies close to that man's foot—and so on, lower

And lower.

[*Exit Bos., L. H.*]

Del. He is a very court-gall.

Ant. Truly,

It is a great pity he should be neglected

If he have merit; nor seems it politic,

For want of action breeds black malcontent.

Del. See, yonder, the haughty Arragonian duke!

[*They stand aside, respectfully, up L.*]

Enter FERDINAND; SILVIO and CASTRUCCIO, attendants.

Ferd. Who took the ring oftenest?

Sil. Antonio Bologna, my lord.

Ferd. Our sister duchess' great master of the household?

Sil. He's here, my lord.

And tho' I would not chafe his modesty

By gilding of his virtues in the sun,
Yet to my observation he presents
The pith and pattern of rare qualities.

[*Ant. bows, and comes forward.*]

Ferd. [*To Sil.*] Is it your lordship's purpose now to leave
Our sister duchess' court?

Sil. [*L.*] It is, your highness.

Ferd. [*c.*] In Rome, ere long, I hope to find you, sir.

Sil. Your grace shall arrive most welcome.

Ferd. Till then we thank you.—

[*Turning to Ant.*]

You are a good horseman, Antonio.

What do you think of good horsemanship?

Ant. Nobly, my lord. As out of the Grecian horse issued
many famous princes, so out of brave horsemanship arise the
first sparks of growing resolution, that lift the mind to noble
action.

Ferd. You have spoken worthily. But, tell me, Antonio:
Is it true that you have other skill, far higher, as learned clerks
conceive it, than gallant horsemanship? 'Tis said you can take
more perilous flights i' the air, by night, than ever were seen
in the circus by sun-light—yea, even a prance among the stars.
Is it not so?

Ant. Your highness would smile at my humble studies of
astrology.

Ferd. Nay, I admire all such bright reading. The course
you take among the starry houses is like the tracing out of lofty
pedigrees, since the noble fortunes of great princes may fairly
be calculated by the purity of their blood, which can never mix
with baseness. It is a noble study, Antonio.

[*A trumpet sounds, off R. H.*]

Sil. [*Looking off.*] Your grace's brother, the lord cardinal,
and your sister, the Duchess!

*Enter the DUCHESS, the CARDINAL, CARIOLA, GUISEPPA,
GRISOLAN, and Attendants, R. H.*

Card. Are the galleys come about?

Gris. They are, my lord.

[*Goes up, R.*]

Ferd. [*To the Duchess.*] Sister, lord Silvio comes to take
his leave.

[*Ferd. talks aside with the Card.*]

Duch. [*Crossing to Sil.*] As we were pleased in his
friendly visit,

So must we rate our grief at his departure.
Perhaps, sir, there's no need yet?

Sil. Noble lady, I must to Rome.

Duch. [*As they walk up.*] You will return ere long?

Ferd. Sister, I have a suit to you.

Duch. To me, sir ?

Ferd. A gentleman here, Daniel de Bossola, of Padua formerly——

Duch. Yes, I have heard his name.

Ferd. A worthy fellow he is ; pray, let me entreat for the provisorship of your horse.

Duch. Your recommendation promotes him to the office.

Ferd. [*To an Attendant.*]—Call him hither.

[*Exit Attendant, L. H.*]

We are now on parting. Good lord Silvio,
Commend our loves to all our noble friends.

Card. With duty to his holiness.

Sil. Sirs, I shall.

Duch. Farewell, sir.

Ferd. Expect us soon in Rome.

Duch. [*To Attendants.*] Bring round the *vetture*!

[*To Sil.*] We'll take you down to the haven.

[*Exeunt the Duch. with Sil. and train, L. H.—Ferd. and the Card. walk aside.—Cari. who is last in the train, speaks aside to Ant.*]

Cari. You must attend my lady in the gallery, some half-hour hence.

Ant. I shall do so.

[*Exit Cari. after the Duch., L.*]

[*Exeunt Ant. and Del., L. 2 E.*]

Card. [*To Ferd.*] Be sure you entertain that Bossola for your intelligence ; I would not be seen in't ; And therefore many times I have slighted him, When he did court my furtherance, this morning.

Ferd. Antonio, the great master of her household, Had been far fitter.

Card. You are deceived in him :
His nature is too honest for such business.

[*Looking off.*]

Bossola !—I'll leave you.

[*Exit Card., R.*]

Enter BOSSOLA, L. H.

Bos. I was lured to you, my lord,
Tho' my coming has scared away divinity.

Ferd. My brother, the lord cardinal, could never
Endure you.

Bos. Never since he was in my debt.

Ferd. May be some oblique character in your face
Made him suspect you.

Bos. He did suspect me wrongfully.

Ferd. For that
You must give great men leave to take their times.
Distrust doth cause us seldom be deceiv'd.

Bos. Yet, take heed, your highness
For to suspect a friend unworthily,
Instructs him the next way to suspect you,
And prompts him to deceive you.

Ferd. There's gold.

Bos. So.

What follows? never rain'd such showers as these
Without thunderbolts i' th' tail of them.

Ferd. I give you that
To live i' the court here, and observe the duchess;
To note all the particulars of her behaviour,
What suitors do solicit her for marriage,—
And whom she best affects. She's a young widow:
I would not have her marry again.

Bos. No, sir?

Ferd. Do not you ask the reason; but be satisfied,
I say I would not.

Bos. It seems you would create me
An invisible spy.

Ferd. Such a kind of thriving thing
I would wish thee; and ere long, thou may'st arrive
At a higher place by't.

Bos. [*Pointing downwards.*] Or a lower.

Ferd. [*With cold hauteur.*] There is a post I have procured
for you

This morning,—the provisorship o' th' horse;—
Have you heard on't?

Bos. No.

Ferd. 'Tis yours: is 't not worth thanks?

Bos. O, that to avoid ingratitude
For the good deed you have done me, I must do
All the ill man can invent! Thus the devil
Candies all sins o'er; and what heaven terms vile,
That names he complimentary.

Ferd. Be yourself;

[*Crosses, R.*]

Keep your old garb of cynical bitterness—
Foil all suspicion—doze, and take your time;
Weeks, months, nay years, so you keep constant watch,—
But give me timely note of all you find.

Bos. The provisorship o' th' horse. 'Tis a good place;
But evil in the earning. Why should this duke
Turn pale with passion at the very thought
Of 's sister's second marriage? He is lord
Of Tarragona—hath a great estate
In Old Castile—a dukedom in Calabria—
And covets he succession of this duchy

[*Exit, L.*]

Of Malfi?—[*pauses.*] No; 'tis something in his blood
Of monstrous pride, that would not have her wed
Save by his choosing? 'Tis not my affair.
So to my task. [Exit Bos., L.]

SCENE II.—*Apartment in the Palace of the Duches
opening upon a private Gallery.*

Enter the DUCHESS and CARDINAL, C.

Duch. But wherefore all this counsel? What in me
Have you descried should teach your heated wits
To picture forth such need of chilling airs.
I live not in a palace made of ice.

Card. You could not, sister: it would melt before you.

Duch. My lord! This is scarce brotherly.

Card. It is true.

Be warned in season—look to action's fruits—

Wisdom begins at the end: remember it.

[*Looking off.*]

But he who stands chief representative

Of our so ancient family, will now

Claim your most earnest ear.

Enter FERDINAND. He fixes his eye upon the Duchess.

Duch. [C., to both, after a pause.] I do attend you.

Card. [R.] We are to part from you; and your own discretion

Must now be your director.

Ferd. [L.] You are a widow;

You know the world—what courts and courtiers are—

Let not youth, high demeanour, eloquence—

Card. No; though all men's adornments met in one.

Ferd. Nor anything without the addition—honour—
Sway your high blood.

Card. They are most luxurious

Will wed twice.

Duch. This doth libel many

Most honourable, and seems tyrannous—

Though it concerns not me.

Ferd. Look that it doth not.

Duch. But this is hard. And on our parting, too!

Card. 'Tis brotherly care of you.

Ferd. Now, hear me, sister.

You live in a rank pasture, here i' the court.

There is a kind of honey-dew that's deadly;

'T will poison your fair fame. Look to 't and tremble.

Duch. This is terrible good counsel. Is there more?

Ferd. I would have you give o'er these feasts and revels: Vizors and hoods, and masks are whispering-rooms, That ne'er were made for goodness. Be not cunning; Your darkest actions, nay your privatest thoughts Will come to light.

Duch. So.

Card. You may flatter yourself, And take your own choice—privately be married Under the eaves of night—

Ferd. Think it the best voyage That e'er you made: like the irregular crab Which though 't goes backward, thinks that it goes right Because it goes its own way: but observe, Such weddings may more properly be said To be executed than celebrated.

Duch. I think This speech between you both was studied; It came so roundly off.

Ferd. Take it to heart— Receive it, poniard deep. You are my sister; Guard well the honour of our noble name, In keeping free your own. Now, fare-you-well.

[*Exeunt Ferd. and the Card., c., the Duch. makes them a formal obeisance.*]

Duch. Shall this move me? If all my royal kindred Lay in my way unto this marriage, I'd make them my low footsteps: and even now, Even in this hate, as men in some great battles, By apprehending danger, have achiev'd Almost impossible actions, (I have heard soldiers say so, So, I, through frights and threatenings, will assay This dangerous venture.

Enter CARIOLA, R. C.

Hither, Cariola!

To thy known secrecy I have given up More than my life—my fame.

Cari. Both shall be safe.

Duch. I do believe it. Is Antonio come?

Cari. He attends you, in the gallery.

Duch. Good dear soul, Leave me: but place thyself behind the arras, Where thou may'st overhear us. Wish me good speed,
[*Exit Cari., c.*]

For I am going into a wilderness
 Where I shall find nor path, nor friendly clew,
 To be my guide.
 The misery of us that are born great !
 We are forc'd to woo, because none dare to woo us :
 And as a tyrant doubles with his words,
 And fearfully equivocates, so we
 Are forc'd to express our violent affections
 In riddles and in dreams, and leave the path
 Of simple virtue, which was never made
 To seem the thing it is not.

Enter ANTONIO, L. C.

I sent for you : sit down ;
 Take pen and ink, and write : [*Ant. sits at table, L.*] are you
 ready ?

Ant. Yes, madam.

Duch. What did I say ?

Ant. That I should write somewhat.

Duch. O, I remember.

After these triumphs and this large expense,
 It's fit, like thrifty husbands, we inquire
 What's laid up for to-morrow.

Ant. So please your beauteous excellence.

Duch. Beauteous !

Indeed I thank you : I look young for your sake :
 You have ta'en my cares upon you.

Ant. I'll fetch your grace

The particulars of your revenue and expense. [*Rising to go.*]

Duch. O, you are

An upright treasurer ; but you mistook :
 For when I said I meant to make enquiry
 What's laid up for to-morrow, I did mean
 What's laid up yonder for me.

Ant. Where ?

Duch. In heaven.

I am making my will, (as 'tis fit princes should,
 In perfect memory,) and, I pray, sir, tell me,
 Were not one better make it smiling, thus,
 Than in deep groans, and terrible ghastly looks,
 As if the gifts we parted with procur'd
 That violent distraction ?

Ant. O, much better.

Duch. If I had a husband now, this care were quit :
 But I intend to make you overseer.

What good deed shall we first remember ? say.

Ant. Begin with that first good deed of the world
After man's creation, the sacrament of marriage :
I'd have your grace provide yourself a husband.

Duch. Indeed ! What do you think of marriage ?

Ant. I take't, as those that deny purgatory,
It locally contains, or heaven, or hell,
There's no third place in't.

Duch. How do you affect it ?

Ant. As I do hope for heaven !

Duch. Fie, what's all this ?

One of your eyes is blood-shot ; use my ring to 't,
They say 'tis very sovereign : 'twas my wedding ring,
And I did vow never to part with it
But to my second husband.

[Giving a ring.]

Ant. You have parted with it now.

Duch. Yes, to help your eye-sight.

Ant. [As if dazzled.] You have made me stark blind.

Duch. How ?

Ant. There is a saucy and ambitious devil,
Dancing in this circle.

Duch. Remove him.

Ant. How ?

Duch. There needs small conjuration, when your finger
May do it ; thus ; does it fit you, sir ?

[She puts the ring upon his finger : he kneels.]

Ant. What said you ?

Duch. Sir,

[With a gracious yet tender air.]

This goodly roof of yours, is too low built ;
I cannot stand upright in 't nor discourse,
Without I raise it higher : raise yourself ;
Or, if you please, my hand to help you : so.

[Raises him.]

Ant. Conceive not, madam, that I am so dull
But that, confusedly, I apprehend
Whereto your favours tend.

Duch. Now, the ground's broke,
You may discover what a wealthy mine
I make you lord of.

Ant. O, my unworthiness !

Duch.

Nay, I must tell you,

If you will know where breathes a complete man,
(I speak it without flattery,) turn your eyes,
And progress through yourself.

Ant. Were there nor heaven nor hell,
I should be honest : I have long serv'd virtue,
And ne'er ta'en wages of her.

Duch. Now she pays it. Go, go brag

You have left me heartless ; mine is in your bosom :
 I hope 'twill multiply love there. You do tremble :
 I do here put off all vain ceremony,
 And only do appear to you a young widow
 That claims you for her husband.

Ant. Truth speak for me ;
 I will remain the constant sanctuary
 Of your good name. [*They join hands.*]

Duch. I thank you, gentle love.

Ant. [*Putting one arm round the Duchess.*] But for your
 brothers ?

Duch. Do not think of them :
 All discord without this circumference
 Is only to be pitied, and not fear'd :
 Yet, should they know it, time will easily
 Scatter the tempest.

Ant. These words should be mine,
 And much that you have spoken, if some part of it
 Would not have savour'd flattery.

[*Cari. comes from behind the arras to R. C.*]

Ant. Ha !

Duch. Be not amaz'd, Cariola's of my counsel :
 I have heard lawyers say, a contract in a chamber
Per verba presenti is an absolute marriage.

[*With a noble and devout air.*]

Bless, heaven, this sacred gordian,—which, let violence
 Never untwine !

Ant. And may our sweet affections, like the spheres,
[*Raising his hand reverentially to Heaven.*]

Be still in motion.

Duch. Quickening, and make
 The like soft music.

Ant. That fortune may not know an accident
 Either of joy, or sorrow, to divide
 Our fixed wishes.

Duch. How can the church build stronger ?
 We now are man and wife, and 'tis the church
 That must but echo this. Now shall you lead
 Your fortune by the hand. [*Taking his hand, going up stage.*]
 You speak in me this, for we now are one :
 We'll talk together, and at leisure plot
 T' appease my humorous kindred.
 O, let me shroud my blushes in your bosom,
 Since 'tis the treasury of all my secrets !

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Court, with Colonnade in the Palace of the Duchess.**Enter BOSSOLA, L.*

Bos. What thing is in this outward form of man
 To be beloved? We account it ominous,
 If nature do produce a colt or lamb,
 A fawn or goat, in any limb resembling
 A man,—and fly from 't as a prodigy;
 Man stands amaz'd to see his own deformity
 In any other creature but himself.
 I know what I am, and yet I do not shudder,
 But covet honours. Why not?—no one else
 Seeing what's graved within, I shall do well
 Hide crooked nature under a rich outside.
 Here have I lived midst luxuries of a court—
 Say, rather *lurk'd* among them—these two years.
 The Duke said—be not hasty—take due time;
 But lose no chance of observation. Well,
 Methinks I now approach discoveries
 Of weighty note. The Duchess wanes i' the cheek,
 And, contrary to our Italian fashion,
 Wears a loose-bodied robe. I do suspect—
 I will seem blind—but now must never sleep.

[*Exit.*]*Enter ANTONIO and DELIO, L.*

Del. And so long married! two years! you amaze me!

Ant. Let me seal your lips for ever, Delio,
 For did I think that anything but air
 Could carry these words from you, I should wish
 You had no breath at all. Yes, it is true!
 These two years have I privately been married
 To my royal mistress, who has given birth
 To a lovely daughter.

Del. And ne'er till now divulge
 The secret to me!

Ant. Oh, my friend, how often
 Have I desired to do so, and relieve
 My breast of its great weight of happiness,
 By sharing somewhat of it; yet I dared not.
 Thou know'st what dangers round our nuptial couch
 Constantly hover, though the Duchess smiles,
 And bids me cease to fear.

Del. 'Tis plain Duke Ferdinand

And the Cardinal, as yet, know nought of this,
Or you had heard of 't in some signal vengeance.
But think you no one else about the court
Hath any hint?

Ant. None, save Cariola,
And she is faithful. Soft! my lady comes!
Pray you, depart.

Del. Happy Antonio! [Going, crosses R.]
[*Aside.*] And yet 'tis happiness that o'er a gulf
Hangs by one golden hair of beauty's head. [Exit, R.]

Enter DUCHESS, L.

[*She takes Ant. by the hand.*]

Ant. [*Kneeling.*] My lady, and my Duchess.

Duch. [*Smiling.*] Say, your wife.
Why do you kneel, sir?

Ant. Prythee let me, madam,
For at this moment something in your presence,
And my heart, fills me with trembling,—
A fear that's bred of deep affection.

Duch. [*Raising him.*] Rise!
Nay, you bring waters to mine eyes, as causeless
As are your own. Hath not heaven's purest dews
Ripen'd our sacred passion?

Ant. Ever.

Duch. Tell me, then,
The present cause of these your anxious looks.

Ant. Happiness
Too great—too perfect—and the measure full,
Forewarns some change. Oh, can it be, the fates
That weave all destinies, should e'er allow
Unequal distribution such as this—
Large stores of misery thick-sown thro' the world,
And one man's field exempt?

Duch. You boast too much.

Ant. Oh, less than half the truth, for have I not
Seen Paradise, and tasted it in dreams,—
And on awakening to the sober truth
Found still 'twas Paradise.

Duch. Antonio!
Think how long 'tis that I have been your wife.
Romances always close with the first year
Their heroes' raptures.

Ant. Mine are my best of life,
And can but close with it.

Duch. You have imparted
Our secret to your friend?

Ant. As you permitted.

Duch. I had hoped this sharing would have wrought in you
An easier mind. [Putting on his hat.]

Ant. It should—it shall be so;
And since our daughter's birth has 'scaped all eyes,
We, by like management, may still keep close,
When heaven shall next to thy maternal breast
Vouchsafe —

Duch. [Looking off.] Some of the court!

[Ant. retires a few paces, taking off his hat.]

Enter CARIOLA, GUISEPPA, GRISOLAN, four LADIES,
and two PAGES, L. H.

Gris. [Bantering Guis.] What should my lord Castruccio say
to this?

Guis. [Laughing.] In sooth I care not.

Duch. What is your pleasantry?

Gris. This lady, gracious madam, with her husband
Being invited by the lord Cardinal
To visit him in Rome, outspreads her wings
For swift departure.

Duch. Sir, they had my leave.

Gris. Yes, madam; but the fair one goes alone,
Leaving Castruccio —

Guis. To pack up my robes,
Laces, and jewels, to his own conceit;
O'er which he 'll linger yet a week or more.

Duch. [Smiling.] I shall not interfere; and yet, methinks
It is not courteous to his years. Howbeit,
I think we oft affect more ceremony
Than needful in our private life. I have heard
That courtiers once in France oft wore their hats
Before the king.

Ant. I have seen it.

Duch. Why should not we bring up that fashion here?
[To Antonio.] Be you the example to the rest o' the court:
Put on your hat first.

Ant. [r.] Madam, pardon me:
I have seen, in colder countries than France,
Nobles stand bare to the prince; and the distinction
Methought shewed reverently.

Duch. I do not wish it—
And least in you.

Cari. [*Aside to the Duch.*] I pray your grace, a word.
[*They move apart. The rest walk up conversing, Ant. re-
tires, R.*]

Duch. [*Smiling.*] About the hat?

Cari. Oh, madam, have more caution.

Duch. I thought so.

Cari. Yet believe it is not idle.

Duch. Are we watched?

Cari. [L. c.] Perhaps not—yet indeed
'Tis very like; and these your favours shewn,
How slight soe'er, are marks for keen suspicion
To follow towards sure knowledge.

Duch. [R. c.] Breed no fears
For me, until I tremble for myself:
Your woman's nerves, right zealous in their love
For me, create these dangers. Say you now,
If that Antonio had this morning sent me,
As did Bossola, whom you seem to hate,
A present of choice fruit—not rare, nor ripe,
But choice, being first o'the season—you had then
Espied grave signs and portents; but because
Bossola brought them, you have lost all dread
Of palace-whispers!—No, girl—'tis the secret
You hold, that makes your hand shake—not men's thoughts.

[*They walk up, c. Ant. comes down, R.*]

Ant. [*Aside.*] I would say more to Delio—I may need
Important service of him.

[*Exit, R.*]

[*Guis., Gris., Ladies, and Pages come down laughing.*]

Guis. Rail on!—and here's Castruccio, who shall have his
share.

Enter CASTRUCCIO, L. H

Cast. [*Humorously.*] My share with you is ever largest
In the quality of silence.

Gris. All the rest
She takes.

Cast. To Rome, I trust—so she exhaust the stock
Before I follow.

Guis. How unjust!
Your silence is my dulness—my reproach;
I hate your unamusing gravity—
Your senatorial saws—your drowsy proverbs:
It is not wisdom—nobody mistakes it—
It looks like what it is.

[*They laugh.*]

Cast. My martyrdom!
[*All laugh except the Duch., who comes slowly down with Cari.*]

Cari. [*Aside to the Duch.*] Madam, you are not merry—
you look pale!

Duch. [*Smiling faintly.*] Do I?

Cari. [*Taking her hand.*] Madam!

Duch. Oh, it is nothing. [*Withdraws her hand.*]

Guis. [*To the Duchess.*] Your grace
Will give me letters for the lord Cardinal,
And also for the duke?

Duch. I have them ready.

Cariola shall bring them. Speed ye well.

[*Exeunt the Duchess, with Cariola, R.; the rest, L. H.*]

SCENE II.—*Corridor in the Duchess's Palace.*

Enter ANTONIO 1st, and DELIO 2nd, R.

Del. Your infant daughter, then, you think secure
From all suspicion in those suburb gardens?

Ant. [*L.*] I thought so once, but that the Duchess's visits
Have been of late so little guarded—open—
Therefore my wish I fain would break to her,
That you should bear the charge.

Del. Most willingly.

Ant. [*Taking his hand impressively.*] Besides—my friend—
if once to be a mother
In such environment, that glorious spirit
Hath safely endured, and thro' all pain and danger;
Another such event may not combine
Those happy auspices.

Ant. [*Looking off.*] Bossola's here. [*They retire, R. C.*]

*Enter BOSSOLA, meditating, L. 1 E. He pretends not
to see them.*

Ant. Now, sir—your contemplation? I divine it.
You are studying to become a great wise fellow.

Bos. Not by *your* science. Comets and stars are too swift
and too high for my humility, and besides too intricate. The
subtlest folly proceeds from the subtlest wisdom.

Ant. You desire not to seem puffed up with your prefer-
ment.

Bos. I look no higher than I can reach—when a man's
mind runs faster than his horse can gallop, they both quickly
tire.

Ant. You would look up to heaven, but I think the devil
that rules i' the air stands in your light.

Bos. O, sir, you are lord of the ascendant—chief man with the duchess—and court-astrologer to boot. A prince was your cousin-german—a long way removed. But say, you were lineally descended from King Pepin—or wert he himself, what of this? Search the heads of the greatest rivers in the world, you shall find them but bubbles of water. Some would think the souls of princes were brought forth by a more weighty cause than those of humbler persons. They are deceived: there's the same hand to them; the like passions sway them. The same reason that makes a small farmer go to law with a peasant for a whisp of straw, and undo his neighbours, makes princes spoil a whole province, and batter down goodly cities with the cannon. [*Crosses, R. H.*]

Enter CARIOLA, L. H. 3 E. in haste to Antonio.

Cari. [*Aside.*] O good Antonio—I fear you are undone!
My lady—

Ant. [*Aside.*] The Duchess!

[*They walk up, Cari. speaking in agitation to Ant.*]

Bos. [*To Delio.*] Is some one dead?

Del. I hope not.

Bos. Dying?

Del. I do not know.

Bos. [*Aside.*] Ay, here's my moment!

Be Argus—and with ears to match—what now!

[*Exit Cari. L., while Ant. comes down with an air of authority.*]

Ant. [*Loudly and looking off.*] Shut up the court gates!

Enter GRISOLAN, with four SERVANTS, L. 2 E.

Gris. Why, sir—what's the danger?

Ant. Shut up the posterns instantly, and call

All the officers of the court.

Gris. I shall, sir.

[*Exit, L. 2 E.*]

Ant. [*To the Servant.*] Who keeps the key o' the park?

1st Servant. Forobosco.

Ant. Let him bring 't presently. [*Exit Serv., L. 2 E.*]

Re-enter GRISOLAN, with four OFFICERS, L. 2 E., and two SERVANTS of the Court.

Ant. Gentlemen, we have lost
From time to time, you know, much plate, and but this
evening
Jewels to the value of a thousand ducats
Are missing in the Duchess' cabinet.
Are the gates shut?

Gris. Yes.

Ant. It is her Grace's order
Each officer be lock'd within his chamber
Till the sun's rising; and that the keys be sent
Of all their chests and of their outward door
Into her cabinet. She is very ill—
These losses grieve her.

Gris. At her grace's pleasure.

[*Gris. and the rest bow and retire, while Ant. walks up, speaking privately to Del. The stage darkens.*]

Bos. [*Aside, crossing L.*] So—here's a cunning scheme for
secrecy. [Exit, L.]

[*Exeunt all but Ant. and Del., who come down, Ant. in great agitation.*]

Ant. We are lost—though all be lock'd up for the night,
To-morrow's dawn will find us. There is left
No time for her remove.

Del. Did you provide
The politic safe conveyance of the nurse,
Your Duchess planned?

Ant. Yes, but concealment's vain—
You are this night, dear friend, to post to Rome—
Make intercession with the Pope—explain
Our marriage—my life lies in your service.

Del. Doubt me not; still, your fears may pass away
As heretofore. Commend me reverently
To your noble lady, and now fare-you-well.
I wish you all the joys of a blest father;
And for my faith, lay this unto your breast—
Old friends, like old swords, still are trusted best.

[*Exeunt at opposite sides. Stage darkens to night. Mass sung within, heard faintly as proceeding from the chapel of the palace, at the back of the stage. Mass ceases.*]

Re-enter BOSSOLA, stealthily, L. 2 E.

Bos. A mass i' the palace chapel—not for the dead,
Nor for devotion—but to drown the cry
I heard erewhile. Hist! all is silent again.
It was perhaps some melancholy bird.
Hist!—footsteps!—this way!—I must know who 't is.

[*Retires, R.*]

Enter ANTONIO from house, L. 3 E.

Ant. I heard some noise! Who's there? What art thou?
speak!

Bos. [*R.*] Antonio, put not your face nor body

To such a forced expression of fear. I am
Bossola, your friend.

Ant. Bossola!

[*Aside.*] This mole does undermine me.

[*Aloud.*] Heard you not

A noise even now.

Bos. From whence?

Ant. From the Duchess's chamber?

Bos. Not I. Did you?

Ant. Robbers—or else I dreamed.

Bos. Let's walk towards it.

Ant. No. May be it was

Only the rising wind.

Bos. Oh, very likely.

Methinks 'tis cold, and yet you drip with heat,
And you look wildly!

Ant. [*Confusedly.*] I have been setting a figure
In astrology, whereby I hope to find
The Duchess's jewels.

Bos. And how falls your question
O' the stars?

Ant. [*Recovering himself.*] What's that to the, Bossola,
'Tis rather to be questioned what design,
When all men are commanded to their lodgments,
Makes you a night-walker?

Bos. The mass but now
From the chapel, made me sore lament my sins;
Wherefore I crept forth secretly to prayers.

Ant. [*Aside.*] This fellow will undo me. [*Aloud.*] Did
your sins own

Some knowledge of the jewels we have lost?

Bos. False steward would'st accuse me of the theft?

A fig for the imputation! and the jewels
That we have lost, as tho' you shared the loss!

Ant. Thou saucy slave, I'll pull thee up by the roots.

Bos. They may entangle thee, and drag thee down.

Ant. [*Aside.*] I bleed at the mouth.

[*Takes out his handkerchief, and a folded paper with it.*]

'T is ominous—for here

Two letters that I wrote for my name, are lost

In blood! Mere accident.

[*In replacing his handkerchief, he drops the paper.*]

[*Aloud.*] I' th' morning you shall be safe. This door you
pass not:

I do not hold it fit that you come near

The Duchess' apartments till you have cleared yourself.

[*Exit into palace, L. 3 E.*]

Bos. Antonio here about did drop a paper.

[Takes out a small lantern from the folds of his dress.]
Some of your help, bright friend. Ah, here it is!
What's this? Astrology! a nativity calculated.

[He reads.] Um—um—a—a—between the hours of twelve
and one i' the morning, Anno Domini, 1504. (That's this
year.) Decimo nono Decembris. (That's this night.) Taken
according to the Meridian of Malfi. (That's our Duchess—
happy discovery!) The lord of the first house being combust
in the ascendant, signifies short life; and Mars being in a
human sign, joined to the tail of the dragon, in the eighth
house, doth threaten a violent death to the CHILD. *Cætera non
scrutantur!*

Why now, 'tis most apparent! and Antonio
Is made a confidant of this choice secret,
From which our courtiers are lock'd up! Here, then,
Lie hid the jewels and the stolen plate! [He pauses.]
If one could find the father, now? But that

Time will discover. I will copy this,
Then drop it where I found it. Old Castruccio
Shall hurry off to Rome—by him I'll send
A letter to Duke Ferdinand, shall make
Both brothers' galls o'erflow to my sure profit. [Exit.]
[Mass again sung within, faintly heard.]

Enter ANTONIO, he kneels with clasped hands.

Ant. Oh Nature! mother of the stars—this earth—
And all the life that doth inhabit it;
On whom each luminous system of the sky
Relies for help to hold it in its course,
E'en as the poorest mortal of an hour;
Let me, Great Parent, thank thee, once again,
Who hast sustained my heart's beloved—my wife—
And graced her with thy noble fortitude,
Making me humble in my happiness. [He rises.]
Now then to meet all dangers: with the dawn
I shall see clearer what is best to do.
As yet, all's safe,—Oh may we keep it so. [Exit.]

SCENE III.—Terrace of the Palace of Cardinal Graziani, in
Rome.

Enter the CARDINAL and GUISEPPA, L. H. 2 E.

Card. You think not, then, our sister Duchess' mind
Leans to a second marriage?

Guis. Not a sign
Of this appears. She ever seems content.

Card. But that content may have a hidden source
 In some amour. What nobles of the court
 Doth she affect most—feast with oftenest—
 Ride forth with—read—sing—walk—hold converse with ;
 Or smile upon at distance, shunning speech,
 But showing somewhat mutual in both minds ?

Guis. Nothing of this hath e'er been visible
 In any marked degree. Her exercise,
 As her amusements, are for the most in private,
 'Midst her own household officers,—Antonio—
 Bossola—Grisolan—these are the chief.

Card. It matters little, henceforth—a fit mate
 Of most illustrious house, will shortly end
 Our cares for her.

Guis. Indeed, my lord ! pray whom ?

Card. Within my cabinet an open letter
 Will tell you.

Guis. [*Goes hastily L., then stopping.*] May I read it ?

Card. If you wish. [*Exit Guiseppa, L. H.*]

Since Ferdinand settles that our sister wed
 The great prince Malateste, who so lately
 Hath made proposals to him : 'tis a choice
 In all-ways suited to me. Rich in lands—
 Nobly descended—very old—'tis certain
 The prince's death will give large 'heritance,
 Which I may make my own, because the Duchess
 Cares not for wealth, neither doth Ferdinand
 Covet more land. [*Looking off.*]
 My brother !—some strange news.

Enter FERDINAND with a letter, L. H.

What fury lights thy face ?

Ferd. I have this night dug up a mandrake !

Card. Say you ?

Ferd. And I am grown mad with it !

Card. What's the prodigy ?

Ferd. Read there—a sister damned !—she's loose i' the
 hilts—

Become a notorious strumpet !

Card. Speak lower. [*The Cardinal reads the paper.*]

Ferd. Lower !

Rogues do not whisper it now, but seek to publish it

Aloud ; all Malfi hath it in street songs—

Miles round the country. O, confusion seize her.

[*Crosses to R. H.*]

Card. Is 't possible !

Ferd. She hath had most cunning aids
To serve her turn!

Card. Can this be certain?

Ferd. [*Furiously.*] Curses!—
Curses make black the day, until her heart
Become a crimson sponge to wipe it clear.

Card. Art thou gone mad? Why do you make yourself
So wild a tempest?

Ferd. Would I could be one,
That I might toss her palace about her ears—
Root up her goodly forests—blast her meads—
And lay her general territory as waste
As she has done her honours.

Card. [*Glancing again over the letter.*] Shall our blood—
The noblest blood of Arragon and Castile—
Be thus attainted?

Ferd. Brother, look you where
Our royal stream, made hideous by this stain,
Runs shuddering backwards thrice three hundred years,
Unto the feet of venerable kings,
Throned 'midst the loftiest shadows of the tomb—
Who *spurn* our name into the common dust!

Card. Accursed creature!

Ferd. Methinks I see her laughing!
Excellent hyena! Talk to me somewhat quickly—
Or my imagination will carry me
To see her in his arms.

Card. Whose arms?

Ferd. Whose?

With one o' the wood-yard—one that tends the horses,
Or works i' the fields!

Card. You fly beyond your reason.

Ferd. Defeating my intentions for her marriage
With the Prince Malatesta, by creating
This hell of shame for all of us! Oh, something
Shall quench my wild fire! and allay my thirst. [*Crosses, R. H.*]

Card. How idly shows this rage, which carries you
As men conveyed by witches thro' the air,
On noisy whirlwinds.

Ferd. [*Very slowly, and trembling with passion.*] Have not
you my palsy?

Card. I can be angry unto death, without
This rapture. [*Ferd. crosses in great rage to L. H.*]
Be more temperate—chide yourself.

Ferd. [*With forced composure, L.*] So, I will study only to
appear

The thing I am not. [*Losing all self-command.*] I could kill
her now

In you, or in myself; for I do think
It is some sin in us, heaven doth revenge
By her!

[*Crosses, R.*

Card. Are you stark mad?

Ferd. [*Wildly.*] I would have their bodies
Burnt in a coal-pit with the ventage stopped,
That their curs'd smoke might not ascend to heaven!
Or dip their sheets in clinging pitch and sulphur,—
Wrap them in't, and then light them with a match!

[*Crosses, L.*

Card. [*Going*] I'll leave you.

Ferd. Nay—I have done.

I am confident had I been deep in Tartarus,
And had heard this, it would have put me
Into a cold sweat—stay!

Card. [*Darkly, as he turns round.*] Is there nought to do

Ferd. So much, I must first sleep and dream of it.

Ay, let me rest and freely breathe once more,
Before I act.

Card. You will do well therein:
She will not die meanwhile.

Ferd. I pray not—I pray not.

[*Crosses, R.*

Card. [*Insidiously.*] Do you aim so deeply?

Ferd. My unchangeable resolve shall make me calm,
Even to contemplating her dead form.

Card. And our dishonour.

Ferd. Speak no more to me.

[*Exeunt, R.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Corridor in the Palace of the Duchess.*

Enter ANTONIO and a SERVANT, R. H.

Ant. Say, I wait his coming anxiously. [*Exit Serv., L. H.*
He lingers, fearing to excite suspicion,
Having but now arrived in company
With the Duke Ferdinand from Rome. What bodes it
That they should come together?

Enter DELIO, L. H.

Welcome, Delio!

At once, your news!—What is 't?—have you succeeded,
By intercession with the Pope?

Del. I have not.

Ant. Nor have you hope of it?

Del. In truth, not much.

Ant. Your letters told me of Guiseppa's folly
And insincerity; still, I had thought
Some other means of influence might be found
To lay our cause before the Pontiff's feet.

Del. I dared not, when Guiseppa had made known
To Cardinal Graziani and the others
What stains the Duchess' name.

Ant. All this for me!
The shame of our secret marriage. Delio, tell me,
Do you descry aught possible wherein
I may assist the Duchess? Shall I confess
She is my wife?

Del. The Duke would slay his sister
With his own hand, and make you on the rack
Recount your secret history of love.

Ant. You travelled hither with the Duke?

Del. I did.

Ant. Made he no mention of these matters?

Del. None.

He was less gloomy than his wont—nay, once
He *laughed* aloud.

Ant. I am ill at ease.

Del. But how

Does he comport himself to you?

Ant. As yet,

I have not seen him.

Del. He does not yet suspect you.

Ant. Are you sure?

Del. 'Tis my belief, at present.

But for the people here—what do they say?

Ant. [*With anguish.*] The worst—of my loved Duchess.

Del. And nought of you?

Ant. Yes, but of other sort.

They do observe I grow to great estate,
And doubt mine honesty! for obligations
Of love or marriage between her and me
They never dream of. [*Centre doors are opened by two pages.*]

Del. [*Looking off.*] The Lord Ferdinand
Coming this way.

Ant. [*Looking off.*] He is going to his couch.

Del. The Duchess! See—she is bidding him good night—
He smiles on her.

Ant. I had better not avoid him.

Enter FERDINAND, the DUCHESS, c., CARIOLA, two LADIES, and two ATTENDANTS.

Ferd. I'll instantly to rest, for I am weary.

Duch. You will not rise too early?

Ferd. [R. c.] I had forgotten.

[*He fixes his eyes upon her.*]

I have at length discovered some one worthy
Of sharing Malfi's princely couch with you.

Duch. [c.] With me, sir! pray, who is it?

Ferd. The great Prince Malateste.

Duch. [*Laughing.*] Fie upon him!

He should not think of it.

Ferd. Why not?

Duch. So old.

Ferd. Is he not older in nobility?

The lustre of three centuries adorns
His silver'd head.

Duch. I do not question, sir,

His glorious pedigree; but I have heard

His sight is failing—his teeth gone—his limbs

Infirm—

Ferd. [*Aside, with bitterness.*] I understand you.

Duch. When I choose

A husband, I will marry for your honour.

Ferd. You shall do well in't. [*Crosses to Ant., L. H.*]

How is't, worthy Antonio? [*Ant. bows.*]

Duch. [R. c.] But, sir, I would have private conference
with you,

About a scandalous report is spread,
Touching mine honour.

Ferd. Let me be deaf to 't.

One of Pasquin's paper bullets—court calumny—

A pestilent air, which prince's palaces

Are seldom purged of. Yet say that it were true;

I pour it in your bosom, my fix'd love

Would strongly excuse, extenuate; nay, deny

Faults, if apparent in you. [*Pointedly.*] Go—be safe

In your own innocency. [*Crosses to R. H.*]

Duch. [*Aside.*] Oh, bless'd comfort!

This deadly air is purged.

Ferd. Good night.

Duch. Good night, sir.

[*Eweunt Duch., Cari., Ladies, Pages, Ant., &c., &c.,
L. H., and all except the Duke and two Servants, who
wait behind him.*]

Ferd. [*Aside.*] Her guilt treads fast on burning plough-shares.

Enter BOSSOLA, R. 1 E.

[*Exeunt Servants, R. 1 F.*]

[*To Servs.*] Leave me.

Now, Bossola!

How thrives discovery?

Bos. Sir, uncertainly
As to the father of the children.

Ferd. That must soon appear.

Bos. But for these children.

Ferd. Where

Are they disposed?

Bos. Your highness now may find them
In a sort of garden-house outside the town,
Near the south gate; but, presently, as I learn,
The Duchess will confide them to the charge
Of Signor Delio.

Ferd. Delio! why to him?

Bos. I do not know.

Ferd. You have not yet suborned
Cariola? nor Antonio?

Bos. It were unsafe to try—
They are too honest.

Ferd. Oh the integrity
Of panders! Foul dishonour of our house—
The popular scandal—yet my sister sleeps
At ease—is healthy—prosperous! This night
I will force confession from herself. You told me
You had got within these two days a false key
Into her private chamber.

Bos. I have. [*Producing a key.*]

Ferd. [*Taking it.*] As I would wish.

Bos. What would your highness do?

Ferd. Can you guess?

Bos. No.

Ferd. Do not ask then:
He that can compass me, and know my drifts,
May say he hath flown on star-blasts round the earth,
And pierced her deepest centre.

Bos. [*Drily.*] I do not think so.

Ferd. What do you think then?

Bos. [*Drily.*] That you are too much
Your own chronicle, and that your grace doth grossly
Flatter yourself.

Ferd. [*Laughing fiercely.*] Give me thy hand, I thank thee.

I never gave pension but to flatterers
Till I entertained thee and thy bitterness.
I will prefer thee to some higher post.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.—*Ante-room of the DUCHESS's bed-chamber. A toilette-table with lights, up R. C.*

Enter the DUCHESS, in a robe-de-chambre, with CARIOLA, from the bed-chamber.

Duch. [*Seated at table, c. R.*] Was it not kind o' the Duke?

Cari. [*In attendance, c.*] Beyond all thought, madam.

Duch. Bring me the casket hither—move the glass.

[*Exit Cariola, L. C.*]

Enter ANTONIO, L., by a private passage through a picture, going softly to the Duchess, kneels.

Duch. You get no lodging here to-night, my lord

Ant. Indeed, I must persuade one.

Duch. Very good.

I hope in time 't will grow into a custom
That noblemen shall come with cap and knee
To purchase a night's lodging of their wives.

Ant. I *must* stay here.

Duch. *Must!* you are a lord of mis-rule.

Ant. Indeed my rule in Malfi is confined
To this small district.

Duch. [*Rising and putting one hand upon his lips.*] I'll stop your mouth.

Re-enter CARIOLA, L. C., with casket, which she places on the table.

Ha!

Ant. [*Kissing her hand, and taking the other.*] Nay, that's but one—Venus had two soft doves
To draw her chariot. I must have another.

[*Kisses both her hands.*]

When wilt thou marry, Cariola?

[*Duchess reseats herself at the toilette-table.*]

Cari. [*R.*] Never, sir.

Ant. [*L.*] O fie upon this single life! forego it;
We read how Daphne for her peevish flight
Became a fruitless bay-tree: Syrinx turned
To a pale empty reed: Anaxarete—

Duch. Come, sir, no more mythology; we are grown
Too spiritual for Olympus.

Ant. Let us keep
Their gods, and add our spirit to their age,
So shall their beauty evermore be young.

Duch. And worth our love.

[*Removing a jewelled chain from her neck.*]
This chain was Ferdinand's present
When he came to his dukedom. Did you not admire
He waived my reference to the public scandal
So brotherly?

Ant. Beyond all hope.

Duch. Oh, nothing
Was ever beyond my hope—

[*Laughing.*]

Except to make you
Look on the present with my eyes.

Ant. Your hopes
Ever outshine the stars.

Duch. And now my voice
Would fain out-sing them through the night. I pr'y-thee
When were we so merry?—My hair tangles!

Cari. Madam—let me—

Duch. [*Laughing impatiently.*] No—no!

Ant. [*Aside to Cari.*] Let us steal forth the room,
And leave her talking to herself. I have often
Serr'd her the like—when she hath chafed extremely.
I love to see her angry. Softly—soft—

[*Exeunt Antonio and Cariola through the picture, l. h.*]

Duch. Doth not the colour of my hair 'gin to change?
When I wax grey, I shall have all the court
Powder their hair with orris, to be like me.
You have cause to love me—I enter'd you in my heart
Before you would vouchsafe to ask for the keys.

Enter FERDINAND, behind c., from the Bed-chamber.

We shall one day have my brothers take you dreaming:
Methinks that Ferdinand's presence now at court
Should make you keep your own room;—but you'll say
Love mix'd with fear is sweetest. Have you lost
Your tongue? Do you still speculate what death
We are like to meet? I care not, sir:
For know, whether I am doom'd to live or die,
I can do both like a princess.

Ferd. Die then, quickly!

[*He gives the Duchess a poniard—she rises hastily, and
looks round the room, Ferdinand advances, l.*]

Virtue, where art thou fled?—what hideous thing
Is this that doth eclipse thee?

Duch. [R., *throwing the poniard upon the table.*]
Pray, sir, hear me!

Ferd. [*Still half in abstraction.*]
Or is it true thou art but a bare name,
And no essential thing?

Duch. Sir.

Ferd. Do not speak.

Duch. No, sir.

I will plant my soul in my ears to hear you.

Ferd. O, most imperfect light of human reason
That makes us so unhappy to foresee
What we can least prevent! Pursue thy wishes,
And glory in them; there's in shame no comfort
But to be past all bounds and sense of shame.

Duch. I pray sir, hear me; I am married.

Ferd. So!

Duch. Haply not to your liking; but for that
Alas, your shears do come untimely now
To clip the bird's wings that's already flown:
Will you see my husband?

Ferd. Yes, if I could change
Eyes with a basilisk.

Duch. Sure you came hither
By his confederacy.

Ferd. [*Half drawing.*] Is he here?

[*Walks hastily round the room, looking on all sides.*]

Duch. Why might not I marry?
I have not gone about in this to create
Any new world, or custom.

Ferd. Thou art undone.
And thou hast ta'en that massy sheet of lead
That hid thy husband's bones, and folded it
About my heart.

Duch. Mine bleeds for 't.

Ferd. Thine!—thy heart.
What should I name 't, unless a hollow bullet
Fill'd with unquenchable death-fire.

Duch. You are in this
Too strict, and were you not my princely brother,
I would say, too cruel; for my reputation
Is safe.

Ferd. As a by-word i' the streets!—I know
The depth and compass of your shame—of ours—
My shame—our house's infamy; that house,
Which, like a mountain pinnacle of snow
Had ever reared its head into the heavens,

Receiving honour, and conferring it ;
Now, what pollution !

Duch. Why should only I,
Of all the other princes of the world,
Be cased up like a holy relic !—why ?
I have youth, and a little beauty.

Ferd. They have damned you.
Youth !—beauty !—So, there are some virgins
That are witches. I will never see thee more :
But thou shalt *feel* me ever—day and night,
In all that is to follow, ere you die.

[*Exit R. H. through the door of the Bed-chamber.*]

*Enter ANTONIO, with his sword drawn, and CARIOLA
through the picture.*

Duch. [R. c.] You saw this apparition ?

Ant. [L.] Yes ; we are
Betray'd.

Cari. How came he hither ?

Ant. [*To Cari.*] I should turn
This to thee for that.

Cari. [L. c.] Do, sir, I pray ; and when
That you have cleft my heart, you shall read there
Mine innocence.

Duch. The gallery gave him entrance.

Ant. I would this terrible thing did come again,
That, standing on my guard, I might relate
My warrantable love.

[*Antonio lowers his voice.*] Who knocks ?—More earthquakes ?

Duch. I feel as if some mine beneath my feet
Were ready to blow up.

Cari. [*Listening.*] It is Bossola.

Duch. [*To Ant.*] Away !

[*Hurrying Ant. towards the picture.*]

O, misery, methinks unjust actions
Should wear these masks and curtains, and not we.
You must instantly part hence. I have fashioned it already.

[*Exit Ant. through the picture-frame, L.*]

Enter BOSSOLA, R. H.

Bos. The duke your brother is ta'en up in a whirlwind !
He's set out for Rome.

Duch. So late ?

Bos. He told me
You were undone.

Duch. Indeed, we are very near it.

Bos. How is this, madam?

Duch. [*Confused.*] Antonio—'tis his doing—
The duke—he stood engaged with me for sums
Ta'en up of certain Neapolitan Jews—
And by neglect, or some worse fault, Antonio
Lets all our bonds be forfeit.

Bos. [*Aside.*] What means this?

Duch. Go fetch our officers! and apprehend
Antonio on this charge.

Bos. Madam, I shall.

[*Aside.*] I heard Antonio's voice as I came here;

I'll wait outside, and listen, ere I go. [*Exit, R. H.*]

[*The Duch. hurries to the picture, and leads out Ant.*]

Duch. [*Speaking rapidly.*] The place that you must fly to,
is Ancona.

I will send after you

Our children, with my treasure and my jewels.
Once there, I'll sue protection from the Pontiff.

Ant. [*Rapidly.*] Where is the duke?

Duch. Taken horse for Rome, I hear.

Ant. Is't true—or lurks he near at hand?

Duch. I know not.

Ant. Let me not leave you to this chance.

Duch. What would you?

Ant. Follow me to-night.

Duch. I will.

Wait for me near the southern gate.

Ant. Yes—yes.

[*Exit hastily through panel, urged by the Duchess.*]

Duch. [*To Cari.*] Haste to Grisolan, and bid him
Take a small troop of horsemen to await

Near the southern gate; there also quickly bring

My children. [*Exeunt severally, Cari. L., Duch. c.*]

SCENE III.—*Gardens of the Palace.—Night.*

Enter CARDINAL GRAZIANI, R., in a cloak, and masked.

Card. My brother was to find me here—'tis time—

And this the spot. They are not yet asleep

I' the palace. I see lights—and moving quickly.

Will Ferdinand kill her, and so end our shame,—

Or should we in a dungeon bury her

For life, and give out that a plague had ta'en her?—

A plague as black, as is the infamy

She hath cast upon our house. Ho; who goes there?

Enter FERDINAND, L. H., in a cloak, and masked.

Ferd. [*Hurriedly.*] Brother—all's known—Antonio is the man.

Card. Antonio—master of the household?

Ferd. Yes.

A slave—a smooth knave, made of ink and counters!

Question it not. This moment Bossola hath

Learnt all. She'd fly from Malfi and escape us,

Seeking a refuge in Ancona: thence

To sue protection of the sovereign pontiff.

Card. We must prevent this!

Ferd. I have forecast it. Come.

[*Exeunt hurriedly.*]

SCENE IV.—*The open country.—Moonlight.*

Enter ANTONIO, the DUCHESS, CARIOLA, R. U. E., with a little BOY in her arms, and leading a little GIRL by the hand, followed by one SERVANT.

Duch. Are all our train shrunk to this poor remainder?

Ant. [*Slowly looking round.*] Save two who tend the horses in the thicket.

Duch. Grisolan, with our arm'd escort, ere this should have o'erta'en us. Much my mind misgives me.

[*To the Serv.*] Go, look out in the night, and listen, too.

[*Exit Serv. R. U. E.*]

[*Cariola walks, L., looking off with anxiety.*]

I had a strange dream three nights past.

Ant. What was 't?

Duch. Methought I wore my coronet of state,
And on a sudden all the diamonds faded,
And changed to pearls.

Ant. My sad interpretation
Is—you'll weep shortly; for to me the pearls
Do signify your tears.

Duch. The birds that live i'the field
On the wild benefit of nature, live
Happier than we; for they may choose their mates
And carol their sweet pleasures to the spring.

[*Serv. returns, R. U. E., and in action signifies to Cari. he has looked out in vain.*]

Cari. [*Coming down.*] Alas! 'tis plain that Grisolan doth play false.

Duch. No! he has been forestalled;
I fear some ambush!

Therefore by all my love I do conjure you,

Take horse again, as I at first devised ;
Fly to Ancona where I'll follow you
To-morrow, with an escort faithful to us.

Ant. Let me remain.

Duch. Fly for *my* sake.

Ant. For thine ?

Duch. I do entreat you—will embrace your knees—
So you but act as I now counsel you.

Ant. Best of my life, farewell ; since we must part—
Fate's hand is on us.

Duch. I know not which is best—
To see you dead, or part with you.

[*Ant.* and the *Duch.* embrace ; he then embraces the Children.]

Oh, children !

Right happy 'tis ye have not understanding
To know your misery ; for all our wit
And reading brings us to a truer sense
Of sorrow. In the Eternal Church, sir,
I do hope we shall not part thus.

Ant. Oh, be of comfort !

Make patience a noble fortitude,
And think not how unkindly we are used.

Duch. Must I, a princess, like to a slave-born Russian,
Account it praise to suffer tyranny ?—

And yet—O, Heaven, thy heavy hand is in it.

Ant. Do not weep !—see I can restrain—

Duch. Thou cans't not.

Ant. Heaven fashioned us of nothing ; and our striving
Doth bring us but to nothing, for we know not
Earth's treasures are but shades. [*Crosses to L. e.*] Farewell,
Cariola,

And thy sweet armful. If you do never see us more
Be a good mother to your little ones,
And save them from the tiger. Fare you well.

[*Going, L. u. e., Duch. crosses to him.*]

Duch. Let me look upon you once more, for those words
Came from a dying father. [*They embrace.*]

Your kiss is colder
Than that I have seen an holy anchorite
Give to a pallid skull.

Ant. My heart is turned to a heavy lump of lead
Wherewith I sound our danger. Fare you well. [*Exit, L. 3 e.*]

Duch. My laurel is all wither'd. [*Going towards R.*]

Cari. Shall I order
The horses, madam ?

Duch. Yes, we will return
This night to Malfi; but to-morrow sees us
Far hence.

Enter SERVANT, hastily, R. U. E.

Serv. Your grace, a troop of horse are coming
Direct from Malfi!

Duch. Led by Grisolan.

Serv. No, by three horsemen, masked. [*Exit, R. U. E.*]

Cari. [L.] Betrayed—betrayed.

Duch. Oh, they are very welcome.

When fortune's wheel is overcharged with princes,
The weight makes it move swift.

I would have my ruin

Be sudden.

Bos. [R., *without.*] Look to the horses!

*Enter two men bearing torches, BOSSOLA masked, R. U. E.,
followed by a party of armed men; FERDINAND and the
CARDINAL in cloaks and masks enter last, and take their
stand apart.*

Duch. [To *Bos.*] I am your adventure, am I not?

Bos. You are—your husband also—where is he?

[*The Duch. smiles disdainfully.*]

No answer?

Ferd. [Up R., *without moving from his place.*] Thou shalt
never see him more!

Duch. What devil art thou that counterfeitst heaven's
thunder?

Bos. [R.] Are these your children?

Duch. [*Haughtily.*] Yes!

Ferd. [*Still keeping his stand apart.*] Antonio's?

Duch. [*Haughtily.*] Ay!

Bos. Where is the minion?

Duch. [*Turning away.*] Oh, misery! would thou wert like
an o'ercharged cannon—

Come, to what prison?

Bos. To none.

Duch. Where, then?

Ferd. [R., *Still standing apart.*] To your own shameless palace.

Bos. Fie, madam! Antonio was a base low fellow.

Duch. Were I a man

I'd beat that counterfeit face into thy other. [*Walking aside.*]

Bos. One of no birth.

Duch. The highest!—a fair tree
Born of earth's love, and heaven's pure dews and light.

Man is born happiest when his *actions*
 Are arguments and examples of his virtue.
 But come—whither you please—I am arm'd 'gainst misery :
 Bent to all sways of the oppressor's will—
 There's no deep valley, but near some great hill.

[*Exeunt up stage, R.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An oaken Corridor in the Palace of the Duchess.*
A large lamp is burning on a pedestal, L. H.

Enter FERDINAND and BOSSOLA, R. H.

Bos. 'Twas given out, your highness, as you ordered,
 That while the Duchess' malady endured,
 You held her rule in Malfi.

Ferd. Is it believed
 That her mind fails her ?

Bos. I have so announced it.

Ferd. How does she seem to bear herself
 In her imprisonment ?

Bos. Nobly ;
 She's sad, as one long used to 't, and she seems
 Rather to welcome the end of misery
 Than shun it ; a behaviour so noble
 As gives a majesty to adversity.
 You may discern the shape of loveliness
 More perfect in her tears, than in her smiles.
 She will muse for hours together ; and her silence
 Methinks expresseth more, than if she spoke.

Ferd. Her melancholy seems to be fortified
 By a strange disdain.

Bos. 'Tis so. Antonio's name
 She often murmurs over to herself.

Ferd. My curse upon her !

Bos. And the children's names.

Ferd. No more ! Hath Vincent Lauriola sent
 The image wrought in wax of this Antonio ?

Bos. He hath.

Ferd. Placed where I shewed thee ?

[*Pointing to the centre of the Corridor wall behind them.*]

Bos. Yes.

Ferd. Doth the effigy look
 Like to the cold reality of death ?

Bos. The artist hath wrought subtly : she cannot choose
But think the image a substantial body

Ferd. Remove that lamp—
[Crosses to R. H., *Bos. covers the lamp. Stage darkens.*]

Go now, and straightway bring [Exit *Bossola, L. H.*]
The duchess hither.

Shades, and memories
Of my great ancestors ! look from your tombs,
So that my passion, and my full revenge
May from your solemn countenances chase
This our first blot of shame !

Re-enter BOSSOLA, L. 1 E., with the DUCHESS. Bossola stands apart.

Ferd. Where are you ?

Duch. Here, sir !

Ferd. I would shew you peace.

Duch. Then I will ask your pardon.

Ferd. Here is my hand.

Duch. I affectionately kiss it.

Ferd. [Aside.] My blood recoils.

Duch. 'Tis very cold—like death's.

Ferd. [Leading her towards the centre of the wall, behind.]

If it seems so, it is the influence,
And icy semblance of a deadly thing
That's in my thought.

Duch. Let me at once behold it.

Ferd. You shall.

[He grasps her by one arm. The wall opens in the centre,
displaying a shrine, on which the artificial figure of
Antonio is lying.]

Now greet your husband in his shroud !

Duch. [After a pause of dismay, and anguish.] There is
not between heaven and earth, one wish

I stay for, after this.

Ferd. Doth it not work

Repentance in thy heart ?

Duch. [Not hearing him.] It wastes me more
Than years could waste. Oh ! have some mercy ! bind me—
[He restrains her.]

Bind me to that dear lifeless form, and let me

Freeze into death with him !

Ferd. [Loosing her arm.] 'Tis not yet time. [Exit *Ferd., R.*]

[The opening in the wall closes as the Duchess approaches
it. *Bossola uncovers the lamp. The stage becomes light.*]

Bos. Leave this vain sorrow.

Things being at the worst begin to mend.

The duke must now relent.

Duch. Good, comfortable fellow,
Persuade a wretch, that 's broke upon the wheel,
To have all his bones new set; entreat him live
To be executed again. Who must despatch me?
I account the world a tedious theatre,
Where I do play a part against my will.

Bos. Come, be of comfort. I will save your life.

Duch. Indeed I have not leisure to attend
So small a business.

Bos. Now, by my soul, I pity thee.

Duch. Thou art a fool, then,
To waste thy pity on a thing so wretched
As cannot pity itself. I am full of daggers!
I will go pray:—No, I will curse!

Bos. Forbear!

Duch. I could curse the stars!
And the three smiling seasons of the year;
Nay, the world—
To its first chaos.

Bos. Look you, the stars shine still.

Duch. Oh, but remember that my curse
Hath a great way to go.
Plagues, that make lanes through longest families
Consume them!

Bos. Fie, lady!

Duch. Let them, like tyrants,
Ne'er be remember'd but for the ill they have done!
And when they reach the depths of their sure doom,
Let heaven a little while cease crowning martyrs,
To punish them!—
Go, howl them this, and say I long to bleed;
It is some mercy when men kill with speed.

[*Exit, L. H.*]

Re-enter FERDINAND, R. H.

Ferd. As I would wish.
She thinks she has looked on death; I would 't were true.

Bos. [*Moodily.*] Why do you do this?

Ferd. To bring her to despair.

Bos. I' faith, end here,
And go no farther in your cruelty.

Would'st torture her soul?

Ferd. Furies! that body of hers,
While that my blood ran pure in it, was worth more
Than that which thou would comfort, call'd a soul.

Now what's its worth, compared with her misdeed ?
 Her shame is writ upon the garden walls ;
 Gossips do jest of 't, round the palace gates,
 And while they lay gross wagers who 's the man,
 Some, with a laugh that makes my veins run fire,
 Do hint I wink upon it.

[Crosses to L. H.]

Bos. But must she die ?

Ferd. She must.

Bos. I do not like my task.

Ferd. 'Tis almost ended.

Bos. I have done enough for you.

Ferd. [Drawing out a glittering purse.] And your reward
 Only begins here.

Bos. [Putting it aside.] How should gold reward me ?

Say, I take executioners to kill
 The duchess, as you've plann'd it, 'midst the cries
 Of mad folks,

Whom from the common hospital you've secretly
 Moved hither, so that all who chance to hear
 Shall think her mad ; how, i' the after-time,
 If this be known, shall gold avail to hide
 The brand upon my name ?

Ferd. I' d have thee change it.

Bos. For one of honour, then. You have often said,
 You would promote me to some higher post.

Ferd. Consider it done. [Crosses, R.] The estate of Naldi lies
 Within my gift ; I do create thee Count
 Of Naldi, and therewith all lands that fall
 In that demesne, are thine.

Bos. [Consenting.] I would 'twere better earned.

Ferd. Go now, and as I have directed,—take
 The semblance of old age,—

Be solemn as the tomb, whereof thou speak'st,
 And act as I direct.

I have sworn it !—sworn it !

[Bo. turns to remonstrate.]

[Exeunt, R. H.]

SCENE II.—*Ante-chamber in the Palace of the Duchess,
 opening upon the Bed-room.—A lamp burning on a
 table.*

The DUCHESS seated, CARIOLA standing by her chair.

Cari. Dear gracious lady ! Nay, she does not heed me.
 [Confused, distant noise of wild voices within ; amidst which
 is now and then heard a yell, and a groan, and the ring-
 ing of a large bell.—It ceases.]

Duch. What hideous noise was that ?

Cari. 'Tis the wild consort
Of madmen, I have learnt your tyrant brother
Has placed within your palace, to give colour
To your seclusion. He would have the people
Believe these ravings yours.

[*The wild voices are heard as before, but quickly ceasing.*]
Again those cries.

Duch. Indeed, I thank him; nothing but noise and folly
Can keep me in my right wits; whereas reason
And silence make me mad. Prythee, sit down;
Discourse to me some dismal tragedy.

Cari. Oh, 't will increase your melancholy.

Duch. Thou art deceived:
To hear of greater griefs would lessen mine.
My palace, now my prison!

[*She weeps.*]

Cari. Pray dry your eyes.

[*After a pause.*] What think you of, madam?

Duch. Of nothing.

When I muse thus, I sleep.

[*Rises.*]

Dost thou think we shall know one another
I' the next world?

Cari. Yes, out of question.

Duch. Oh, that it were possible we might
But hold some two days' conference with the dead.
From them I should learn somewhat, I am sure
I never shall know here. [*The wild voices are heard as before.*]

I am not mad yet, to my cause of sorrow
The heav'n o'er my head, seems made of molten brass;
The earth of sulphur! Yet I am not mad.

I am acquainted with strange misery,
As the tann'd galley-slave is with his oar;
Necessity makes me suffer constantly,
And custom makes it easy. [*Wild voices repeated, as before.*]
Who do I look like, now?

Cari. Like to your picture in the gallery.

Duch. I am still myself.

Cari. [*With sad tenderness.*] Or rather a sad monument,
Whose ruins are ever pitied.

*Enter BOSSOLA, disguised as an old man, with long grey hair
and beard, R. H.*

Duch. What would'st thou here?

Bos. I am come to make thy tomb.

Duch. How's this!—my tomb?

Thou speak'st as if I lay on my death-bed,
Gasping for breath; dost thou perceive me sick;

Bos. Ay, the more dangerously since thy sickness
Is ignorant of itself.

Duch. Dost thou know me?

Bos. Yes.

Duch. Who am I?

Bos. Thou art an over-ripe fruit, that not being duly gathered,
art fallen to rot on the soil. There's not a hand shall take thee up.

Duch. [*Looking upwards.*] A Hand will take me up!—A
fallen fruit? no; I am a seed, whose mortal shell must lie and
rot i' the earth before the flower can rise again to the light.
[*Looking round as on her prison.*] Didst thou ever see a lark
in a cage?—such is the soul in the body. The world is like
its little turf of grass; and the heaven o'er our heads, like its
looking-glass, only gives us a miserable knowledge of the small
compass of our prison.

Bos. [*Aside.*] The shadows of the next world, which weigh
down others, seem only to give her wings—[*Aloud.*] I must
execute mine office, whereof the harsh duties assort not with so
much pride, as thou displayest.

Duch. Am not I thy duchess?

Bos. Thou art some great woman, sure; for riot begins to
sit on thy forehead (clad in grey hairs), twenty years sooner
than on a merry milkmaid's. A little infant that breeds its
teeth, should it lie with thee, would cry out as if thou wert
the more unquiet bed-fellow.

Duch. I am Duchess of Malfi still.

Bos. That makes thy sleep so broken.

Glories like glow-worms, afar off, shine bright,—
But look'd at near, have neither heat nor light.

Duch. Thou art very plain.

Bos. My trade is to flatter the dead, not the living. I am a
tomb-maker.

Duch. And thou com'st to make my tomb?—of what stone
wilt thou carve it?

Bos. Nay, resolve me first, of what fashion?

Duch. Why, do we grow fantastical on our death-bed? Do
we affect fashion in the grave?

Bos. Most ambitiously. Prince's images on their tombs do
not lie, as they were wont, seeming to pray up to heaven, but
with their hands under their cheeks, as if they died with the
tooth-ache. They are not carved with their eyes fixed upon
the stars, but as their minds were wholly bent on the world,
the self-same way they seem to turn their faces.

Duch. Let me know fully, therefore, the effect
Of this thy dismal preparation—
This talk fit for a charnel.

Bos. I shall.

[*Confused noise of mad people, as before. Bossola beckons on three Executioners, one bearing a cord, another a black pall.*]

Duch. Oh! bid the duke remember his foul trifling
With loss of reason! bid him tremble for his own!

Bos. Here is a present from your princely brothers—
Welcome it graciously, for it brings
Last benefit, last sorrow.

Duch. Let me see it.

[*The folds of the pall are suffered to drop.*]

Car. Oh! my sweet lady.

Duch. Peace, it affrights not me.

Bos. I am the doleful messenger
That usually is sent to condemned persons
The night before they suffer.

Duch. Even now,
Thou said'st thou wast a tomb-maker.

Bos. 'Twas to bring you
By degrees to mortification.

[*The Executioners advance a few paces at back, looking at the Duchess.*]

Cari. Hence, villains! traitors! murderers! alas!
What will you do with my lady?

[*Wildly to the Duchess.*] Call for help!

Duch. [*Calmly.*] To whom?—to our neighbours—they are
mad folks.

Bos. [*To the foremost Executioner.*] Remove that noise.

[*The Executioner seizes Cari. by the arm.*]

Duch. Farewell, Cariola!

In my last will, I have not much to give;
Thine is a poor reversion.

Cari. [*Struggling to get free.*] I will die with her.

Duch. I pray you look to my little boy—
In health—in sickness. Wilt thou?

Cari. Madam! madam!

Duch. And my poor little girl—beseech thee, let her
Say her prayers, ere she sleep. [*Cari. is hurried out, L.*]

Now, what you please—
What death?

Bos. Strangling. Here are your executioners.

[*The Executioners advance; one at each side of the Duchess.*]

The one with the cord, nearest to Bossola.]

Duch. I forgive them.

The apoplexy, catarrh, or cough o' the lungs,
Would do as much as they do.

Bos. Doth not death fright you ?

Duch. Who would be afraid on't,
Knowing to meet such troops of noble spirits
Who have gone before me.

Bos. [*Whispering to the Executioner with the cords.*] Be firm,
The Duke's i' the next room.

[*To the Duchess.*] Yet, methinks
The manner of your death should much afflict you :
These cords should terrify you ?

Duch. Not a whit !

What would it pleasure me t' have my throat cut
With diamonds ? Or to be smothered
With cassia ? Or to be shot to death with pearls ?
I know death hath ten thousand several doors
For men to make their exits ;

[*The two Executioners lean their heads towards each other,
and whisper behind the Duchess' back, while she speaks.*]
They go on such strange accidents and fates,
You may open them both ways—any way—for Heaven's sake,
So I were out of your whispering !

[*The Duchess passes between the Executioners, and walks
slowly towards the centre doors, to which the Executioners
point.*]

Tell my brothers,
That I perceive death, now I am well awake,
Best gift is they can give, or I can take.

[*The Executioners move slowly after the Duchess, pointing
to c.*]

I would fain put off my last woman's fault.
I'd not be tedious to you.

[*She clasps her hands in prayer. The Executioners slowly
advance.*]

Dispose my breath how please you—but my body
Bestow upon my women ?—will ye ?

1st Exe. Yes.

[*Advances, R. c. Duchess goes to Executioner, and takes
the cord from him, and places it around her neck—they
go up and raise curtains—the Duchess retires into inner
Apartment.*]

Duch. Pull, and pull strongly ; for your able strength
Must pull down Heaven upon me !

[*Executioners advance towards her.*]
Yet stay ! heaven's gates are not so highly arched
As princes' palaces ; they that enter there
Must go upon their knees.

[*Advancing a pace.—
Sinking down upon her knees.*] Come, violent Death !

Serve for mandragora to make me sleep,
 So I may dream of thee, Antonio,
 And our dear children. [*Rising.*] Tremblers, do your work!
 Go tell my brothers—

[*While she speaks the rest, the confused noise of mad people,
 as before, is heard within, and the bell is rung.*]

When I am laid out,

They then may feed in quiet.

[*The Executioners enter within. The curtains fall. Noise
 of mad people. A pause.*]

Bos. I cannot look upon her while 'tis done.

[*He is about to retire, when the Duchess re-enters, and,
 falling in the centre of stage, utters the word "Mercy,"
 and dies.*]

Enter FERDINAND.

Ferd. [*In a hoarse whisper.*] Bossola!

Bos. [*In an under-tone.*] All is over.

Ferd. Is she dead?

Bos. She is what you would have her.

[*Ferd. gradually approaches.*]

Do you not weep?

Other sins only speak; murder shrieks out.

The element of water moistens the earth,

But blood flies upwards, and bedews the heavens.

[*Going to the body.*]

Ferd. Cover her face? mine eyes dazzle; she died young.

Bos. I think not so; her infelicity
 Seem'd to have years too many.

Ferd. She and I were twins;
 And, should I die this instant, I had lived
 Her time to a minute.

Bos. Now begins your pity.
 You have bloodily approved the ancient truth,
 That kindred commonly do worse agree
 Than remote strangers.

Ferd. Let me see her face again.

[*With bitter reproach.*]

Why didst not thou pity her? What
 An excellent honest man might'st thou ha' been,
 If thou had'st borne her to some sanctuary;
 Or, bold in a good cause, opposed thyself,
 With thy advanced sword above thy head,
 Between her innocence and my revenge.

Bos. Her innocence!

Ferd. Thou starv'd, unscrupulous wolf!

I bade thee, when I was distracted of my wits,
Go kill my innocent sister; and thou hast done 't.
For let me but examine well the cause,
What was the meanness of her match to me,
So she could clear her honour of the mire
That vulgar scandal cast?

Bos. She bade me tell thee,
Ere her last struggle, that thy cruel trifling
With loss of wits, might cost thee all thine own.
And now, I see the warning—

Ferd. Peace thou raven— [Clasping his forehead.]
By what authority did'st thou execute
This bloody sentence?

Bos. By yours!

Ferd. [Rising from the body.] Mine!—was I her judge
Did any ceremonial form of law
Doom her to death?—was I the Duke of Malfi?
Where shalt thou find this judgment register'd—
Unless in hell? Thou hast forfeited thy life!

Bos. Who shall dare reveal this?

Ferd. Oh, I'll tell thee:
The wolf shall find her grave, and scrape it up;
Not to devour the corse, but to discover
The murder. Leave me!

Bos. My seal'd patent first! The estate of Naldi.

Ferd. Thou'st be a count!—a noble!—villain!—murderer.
[Ferd. stares at the body and starts back.]

Oh, horror!

That not the fear of Him, who binds the devils
Can prescribe man obedience! Never look
On me again!

Bos. [Rapidly.] Wherefore should I be thus—

Ferd. [Stamping his foot madly.] Get thee into some un-
known part o' the world,

That I may never see thee!

Bos. [Looking after him.] [Exit Ferd.]
Such the payment
Of tyrants to their most unscrupulous tools.
Heaven's justice works by their ingratitude,
And whips us with their sins as with our own.

Enter the CARDINAL, in alarm, R. 2 E.

Card. My brother! stricken with remorse, or mad—
[Glancing down at the dead body.]

Now, good Bossola, one more service from thee,
And we are all you'd have.

Bos. No more of you.

Card. You have been neglected only by delay ;
All that we promised—all that you can ask
Is yours, so you but finish well this work.

Bos. 'Tis finished—horribly well !

Card. Hold ; if unburied

The duchess' body lies, all will be known :
My brother will be summoned by the pontiff,
To explain her death.

Bos. You also, my lord Cardinal.

Card. *Thou* wilt be set upon the rack.

Bos. What would you ?

Be brief, for I must fly.

[*Going, R.*]

Card. [*Staying him.*] Bury the body—
Keep her death secret ; stay—there's more to do—
Antonio must not live—he'll work our ruin.
Track his steps—by some dark means cut him off,
And all the lands of Naldi shall be yours.
My sacred word for it.

Bos. Mine, too !

Card. Lose no time.

[*Exit Card.*]

Bos. I will lose none—for now you teach the way
To bring down righteous vengeance on your heads,
E'en by hands foul as mine. I'll seek Antonio,
And give him help to compass your worst fears.
But first bestow the Duchess in her grave
For mine own safety.

[*Softly going to the curtain, beckoning in Executioners, who
advance slowly, R. and L.*]

Wake not at my step.

[*Bos. stoops to remove the body, curtain drops.*]

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The open country.*

Enter DELIO, R., looking round.

Del. Here is the place Antonio nam'd in 's letter—
Why comes he not ? I see him thro' the trees !

Enter ANTONIO, L.

Ant. Oh, my true friend ! how sadly I went hence.
This is the very spot where I last parted
From my most worshipped lady ; now, I come
Without hope, faltering back.

Del. But should you credit
The gloomy news that's reach'd you of the madness
Of your lov'd Duchess?

Ant. Oh, it may be true;
She had cause enough; and yet my mind misgives
They have imprisoned her. I'll seek the duke—
Confess all—and demand to see Marina.

Del. At present he lies sick, and cannot leave
His bed.

Ant. The cardinal, then.

Del. He seldom stirs
Abroad; and doth refuse all audience.

Ant. So close.

Del. He has been busy with the lands
You own in Naples, and has persuaded
The Marquis of Pescara to blot out
Your title-deeds, and assign all to him.

Ant. How they fortify themselves with my ruin;

Del. Oh vile: your lands not forfeited by law,
But ravish'd by the cardinal's entreaty.

Ant. And still the Duchess constantly shut up
I' the palace; Ferdinand assuming rule
In Malfi—and the Cardinal contriving
Fresh plots! I'll find a means to see him.

Del. But you need rest—come home with me to-night.

Ant. I cannot rest [*Crosses, R.*]; there's no more rest
for me

On this side heaven. I will haunt the gardens
Behind the palace, where the Cardinal
Doth often walk.

Del. But first—nay, as you will.

[*Exeunt, R. H.*]

SCENE II.—*Corridor of the palace.*

Enter GRISOLAN and CASTRUCCIO, R. *Two* SERVANTS *usher-*
ing in PRINCE MALATESTA and SILVIO, L. H.

Sil. [*To Mal.*] These are the gentlemen o' the court—your
highness.

Gris. To good Prince Malatesta, our best welcome.

Mal. I thank you, sirs, though 'tis much grief to me
I should not first receive it from the lips
Of your most noble Duchess; this the more
Since I have heard her malady continues
In it's first force. Is it not so, my lords?

Gris. As we are, told, sir.

Cast. None of us have seen

The Duchess since her illness. E'en to her women
All access is denied.

Mal. [*To Sil.*] There's something dark in this.

Sil. I fear so. [*To Gris.*] But I do not see among you
Antonio Bologna, the Duchess' steward
And confidential officer.

Gris. He was dismissed,
By the Duchess, suddenly.

Sil. And for what cause?

Gris. We could not understand it
So vague were all the charges.

Sil. Bossola, too,
The master of the horse?

Cast. He has fled the court—
We know not whither.

Gris. And to be frank, your highness,
We do suspect foul dealings with the Duchess,
On all sides.

Mal. How on all sides?
Ye are silent. [*To Gris.*] Sir, I'll speak with you in private.
[*Aloud.*] The duke is sick, I hear, but well enough
To give us audience: has he been apprised
Of our arrival?

Cast. [*R.*] Yes your grace; so please you
We will conduct you to him. [*Sil. crosses to R.*]

Mal. [*Aside to Gris., as they walk.*] Now—in brief.
[*Exeunt, R., followed by Servants.*]

SCENE III.—*Great hall of the palace.*

*Staircases R. and L. of C. A secret opening, C., formed
under the stairs. A chair of state, with two other lower
chairs of state, one on each side. Three SERVANTS
discovered placing chairs.*

*Enter FERDINAND, who is leaning upon the CARDINAL,
and CASTRUCCIO, R. H. I E. FERDINAND seats himself
in the Centre, the CARDINAL standing on his R.*

Ferd. Why do I sit here? I am not Duke
Of Malfi!

Card. [*Aside.*] But you know—

Ferd. I recollect.

Card. [*Looking off.*] The prince!

Enter SERVANTS, L. H., preceding the PRINCE.

Ferd. I say I recollect him well,
And he is welcome.

*Enter MALATESTA and SILVIO, L., ushered in by
GRISOLAN, &c.*

Prince, you are welcome. [*Aside to the Card.*] This is right,
is't not?

Mal. [L. c.] Greeting and restoration to your grace.

Ferd. Restoration!

Card. [*Aside.*] Of your health.

Ferd. [*To Mal.*] I pray be seated.

Yes, I have been unwell. Welcome, Lord Silvio;
What news from friends in Rome?

Sil. [*Standing, L.*] Not much, your grace.

Mal. [*Seated, L.*] We rather come by reason of strange news
Reaching us there, from *Malfi*.

Ferd. Speak it all,

As with a trumpet's voice!—my brain already
Hath heard it louder.

Card. [R., *standing agitated.*] In allusion, prince,
To his grace's recent fever.

Ferd. Yes—I said so.

Mal. Duke Ferdinand, 'twere best, without disguise
Or further prelude, I announce the cause
Of this my visit.

Ferd. I am here to listen.

Mal. 'Tis rumoured, duke, that some weeks since, Marina,
Your royal sister, duchess here in *Malfi*,
Was suddenly afflicted with the loss
Of reason; that your grace, then visiting
Her court, assumed command and sovereignty,
Causing her strict confinement, nor allowing
Th' ingress even of her ladies; turning thus
Her chamber to her dungeon; whence at night
Came strange and dreadful cries.

Ferd. But not from her.

Card. No—not from her—they were mere lunatics.

Mal. How came they i' the palace?

Card. Nay—by stealth.

Mal. Lord Cardinal, have a care lest you involve
Yourself too deeply; for his holiness,
The sovereign pontiff, hearing of these things
Did charge Lord Silvio, a mutual friend,—
Me, also, to proceed forthwith to *Malfi*.

Ferd. Well—you are here!

Mal. [*Rising, and looking steadily at the Duke.*] Conduct me
to the Duchess! [*Ferd. stares with confused dismay.*]

Card. [*Aside.*] I would we could, and wrap you in her silence.

Ferd. Go back—to Rome!

Card. [R., to Mal.] I pray, illustrious prince,
You—good Lord Silvio—do not under-rate
His grace's courtesy and true regards
By these his hasty words.

[Mal. sits.]

Ferd. My words are weighed—
And so am I. As for this aged prince,
Whom I, indeed, by reason of his rank
And line magnificent in ancestry,
Did wish to wed our sister, it is time
That he be told his visit here is lost—
Lost like a moonbeam clad in Lapland snows!
Marina doth decline his proffer'd hand—
She said—"He is too much in years—his sight
Failing—[*The Prince rises*]—his limbs failing—[*all rise in
confusion*]—And his mind

An *ignis fatuus*, wandering thro' the dark
And lengthening dulness of his pedigree!"
She said this—and I say it—for I see
How dark we all are—both in sense and deed.
I will go hunt the badger by owl-light.

[*Exit wildly, R., followed by Gris. and Servants.*]

Card. Forgive him, prince—for he is much distracted;
In truth—you must know all—our sister's dead!

Mal. The Duchess!

Sil. Dead!

Mal. How's this?

Card. My lord, your patience:
You saw my brother—in his malady
So lost—I could not in his presence venture
A breath of this; for since our royal sister
Hath by her sudden sickness been cut off,
The mention of her name doth in the duke
Breed dreadful fancies, and a wild discourse,
With menaces and danger in his acts,
That all may fear.

Mal. You must explain these things.

Card. I shall do so. To-morrow, with your leave,
I will return with you to Rome—till then,
I pray, excuse me that I hold my peace—
My brother needing now my utmost care.

Mal. Lord Cardinal, be it so.

Sil. The duchess dead!

[*Exeunt. Servants precede, L. H., shewing out Mal. and
Sil., attended by Cast., and the rest of his Attendants.
Servants remove chairs up, c.*]

Card. Now stand I toppling on the brink of doom!
 Something—at once—conclusive—or I'm lost!
 Why, what else is there, but to make clear work!
 Now that Cariola is laid to rest
 By poison, and Antonio, as I trust,
 By Bossola is slain—that needful head
 Must in familiar darkness shroud itself,
 Or I can know no safety. Bossola
 Must follow his victims closer than he thought;
 Yea—to the silent, unrevealing grave.
 Two trusty villains will I straightway summon,
 Whose steel must find him ere this night be spent.
 So now, thou false slave, Bossola—Count of Naldi!
 Thou art promoted to a fitting place. [Exit, R.]

SCENE IV.—*A Cypress grove, part of the Gardens of the Palace.—Night.*

Enter BOSSOLA, from L. H., 2 E., as if pursued.

Bos. Followed so closely! Now they are at fault.
 Beyond the outer garden shrubberies
 They have lost me. Ah! I know their purpose well.
 The Cardinal seeks my life—I must forestal him.
 And end all in one blow—my last good chance.

[Looking around him.]

What part o' the garden 's this? The cypresses!
 Oh! well I recollect your awful gloom.
 Yonder—oh night of horrors!—did these hands
 Bury the murder'd Duchess! What am I,
 That I should dare to breathe near yonder grave?
 Ye cursed brothers who have hired my hand,
 And set my soul at peril; I will quit ye!
 [After a pause.] I know a secret entrance to the palace.
 This night the Cardinal dies! I then will join
 Antonio—I have traced him back to Malfi—
 And straight pull down this haughty-blazoned house
 On Ferdinand's head,—the sole surviving image
 Of its disastrous honours! [Exit, R. H.]

Enter ANTONIO and DELIO, from L. H. 2 E.

Del. [Looking after Bossola.] Saw you that man?
 He flies as hastily as though he thought
 We followed like two bravos for his life.

Ant. Poor wretch—perchance his terrors may speak truth.
 Though we are not his murderers. Oh, Delio!
[Walking up, Del. remains in front.]

How all this place is spectral with ghastly crimes,
 Darkness and anguish, since the demoniac spirit
 Of Ferdinand and his brother rose to blast
 Marina's territory [*Going within grove*—once so blest.

Echo. [*From the grave of the Duchess.*] Once so blest!

Ant. You heard that voice? It is
 The echo from yon ancient abbey wall,
 Hollow and dismal as my ruined heart.

Echo. My ruined heart.

Ant. [*With deep sadness.*] 'Tis very like my wife's voice.

Echo. Ay, wife's voice.

Ant. [*Walking a pace or two further up.*] Let me approach
 thee nearer, thing of sorrow.

Echo. Thing of sorrow.

Ant. Methinks yon mound is like a new made grave!

Echo. A new made grave!

Ant. [*With anguish.*] Ah, me! alas!

Echo. Ah, me! alas!

Del. [*Walking up and taking Ant. away.*] Come further
 from it! these fancied tones

Do make you lose yourself. Nay come—I would not
 Have you go seek the Cardinal to-night.

[*Going within the grove.*]

Do not.

Echo. Do not.

Del. Hark, the dead stones seem to have pity on you,

[*Getting forward.*]

And give you good counsel.

Ant. [*Rapidly taking up his words.*] Necessity compels
 me! I'll confront him!

And he shall straightway bring me to my wife.

Make scrutiny throughout the several passes

Of your experience; you will see 't impossible

To fly your fate.

Echo. O, fly your fate!

Ant. [*Turning aside.*] Echo, I will not talk with thee; for
 thou

Art as one dead.

Echo. Thou art as one dead.

Ant. [*Wildly, going down l. to Del.*] 'Tis my last venture!

By the secret entrance

I can find access to the Cardinal,
 As once his brother did to my lov'd lady.

Oh, memory! at this deep hour of night

She should be slumbering peacefully with her children.

[*Goes within grove.*]

Yet 'tis more like she weeps, as I do now.
I shall never see her more!

Echo. Never see her more!

[*Echo, further off, and dying away.*]

Never see her more!

Ant. [*Looks towards the cypresses, slowly clasping his hands, then solemnly coming down.*] I remarked not one repetition of the echo

But that,—and, on the sudden, a clear light Presented me a face, folded in sorrow.

Del. [*Drawing him away.*] Your fancy merely.

Ant. [*Crosses R., rousing himself.*] Come, I'll be out of this ague,

For to live thus is not indeed to live.

I will not henceforth save myself by halves—

My claim in sight of heaven will I assert!

Better, my friend, more brief and less appalling,

To fall at once, than be for ever falling!

[*Exeunt severally, Ant. in the same direction, R. H., as Bos.; Del. at the side by which they entered.*]

SCENE V.—*Great Hall of the Palace. A gallery, with central doors, runs along the back. A flight of steps at each side. Secret entrance beneath the gallery.*

Enter MALATESTA, SILVIO, with the PHYSICIAN, L. H.

Mal. [*To Phy.*] Think you the Duke's disease of mind past cure?

Phy. 'Tis to be feared, your highness.

Mal. What form of madness is 't?

Phy. One of strange horror.

In those that are possess'd with 't, there o'erflows

Such morbid humours and imaginings,

They think themselves transformed to ravening wolves,

And oft do steal forth, in the dead of night,

To prowl through hollow churchyards. I had thought

His grace much better; but to-day—

Sil. [*Looking off.*] He comes!

Enter FERDINAND, R. H., with a slow prowling walk, dark haggard eyes, and disordered apparel.

Mal. [*Compassionately.*] Duke Ferdinand!

Ferd. [*With morose gloom.*] Leave me. [*Crosses L. to C.*]

Enter the CARDINAL with anxious looks towards Ferdinand.

Card. Nay, good Ferdinand,—
My noble brother.

Ferd. [*With dark suspicion.*] Leave me.
 [*He looks askance at each of them alternately, while continuing his restless walk.*]

Mal. [*In a soothing manner.*] Why doth your lordship love this solitariness?

Ferd. [*Haughtily.*] Eagles do fly alone!—they are crows, daws, starlings,

That flock together. [*He starts aside in terror.*]

Look! what's that follows me!

Mal. Nothing, my lord.

Ferd. Yes!

Mal. 'Tis your shadow.

Ferd. I'll have no shadow: stay it—stamp it out!

Mal. Impossible, if you move, or the sun shines.

Ferd. It is too like myself—myself all steeped

In blood and tears—my sister's agony,
 Which this cursed Darkness did in pride create,
 Till in her grave she sank. Now hath she sent
 A fiendish messenger to dog my heels
 In mine own form, [*To the Cardinal*] or thine, thou worse
 than wolf,—

Thou smiling poison—whisperer from hell!

Thou art my shadow: [*Looking down*] and this, too—this,
 too!

I'll strangle it. A cord about the throat

Makes a safe murder, for it sheds no blood.

Card. [*R., aside, greatly agitated.*] He will betray all!

Ferd. [*In abstraction, whispering.*] Strangling is a very
 quiet death. [*The Card. approaches him.*]

Stand off, evil one!

For I can match your blackness. What I am

She did predict; her words have clung to me.

Card. [*Aside, to Physician.*] Force him away.

[*Physician makes signs, off.*]

Enter two ATTENDANTS.

Phy. [*Advancing with the two Attendants.*] Your grace
 must sleep awhile.

Ferd. [*Threateningly.*] Use me well—you were best. What
 I have done,

I have done. I'll confess nothing.

[*Going.*]

[*To the Card.*] Vile Bossola!

I will stamp him into a cullis—flay off his skin

[*Turning abruptly to the Phys.*] To cover one of your
 anatomies.

[*To all present.*] Hence! hence! ye are beasts unfit for sacrifice;

There's nothing left of you that's fit for burning!

[*Exeunt Ferd., followed by the Ph. and two Attendants.*]

Card. [*Aside.*] Between each word a pit-fall! What to do?

Mal. Some dreadful cause hath brought this judgment down.

Lord Cardinal, you must answer soon in Rome:

We must to-morrow hence, with break of day:

Your word is passed to go with us.

Card. I shall, sir.

Mal. And now, good-night.

Card. Ho, lights there to the prince's chamber!

[*Aside.*] Ferdinand will divulge all in his ravings.

They must not see him again.

Enter two SERVANTS with lights.

Good night, my lords.—

A word!—ye both need rest before your journey:

I watch beside the duke, and know his mood:

But should ye hear him in his violent fit,

Come not to aid him—take no heed of it—

E'en though he yelled of murder, and the like;

Nay, though myself do cry out, for in sooth

I sometimes pacify him by such means.

Mal. We thank your caution.

[*Exeunt Mal., Sil., and Servs., R. 3. E.*]

Card. Sleep, there's none for me.

Mine eye-balls ache—my lids are sore for sleep,

But I do dread my pillow and its dreams.

For Rome to-morrow! [*Clasping his forehead.*] Let me draw off my thoughts

Awhile, [*Taking a book.*] that I may gather such composure
As suits the explanation I must give. [*Exit, opening the book.*]

[*Stage darkens.*]

Enter BOSSOLA, cautiously, through centre panel, beneath the gallery.

Bos. He was here but now—I heard him. I fear too long
I lingered

I' the outer court.

[*A storm of wind and rain heard without.*]

The storm doth herald me,

And I grow savage as the elements,

But with more cause than they. I'll seek his chamber!

[*Draws his sword, and exit, L. 2 E., not in the same direction as the Card. Storm of wind and rain increases.*]

Enter ANTONIO, through the centre panel beneath the gallery.

Ant. The elements do chorus of my fate,
Contending which shall strike me. I do feel
As a doomed man. The Cardinal! ah, no!
Let me but strive to find my wife; once more
Enclasp her hand—embrace her—heaven's mercy
Direct the rest! [*Exit, L. 2 E.*]

Bos. [*Within.*] Now Cardinal, fall right my sword!
False murderous villain!

Ant. [*Within.*] I had called thee so
More truly—oh, I am gone!

Re-enter BOSSOLA, with Antonio's sword, which he lets fall.

Bos. Antonio! the man I would have saved
Beyond my own life. Farewell, ill-starred man,
Who seemed so fortunate! Would I could bear thee hence.
[*Exit, L. 2 E.*]

*Re-enter the CARDINAL, in a robe-de-chambre, with a book
and a lamp, R. 3 E. He sets the lamp in a niche.*

Card. [*Laying one finger on the book.*] He says there's one
material fire beneath—
And yet it shall not burn all men alike.
[*Puts down the book.*]

How tedious is a guilty conscience!
How it doth conjure up strange phantasies!
When I look into the fish-ponds o' the garden,
Methinks I see a thing arm'd with a rake,
That seems to strike at me!

Re-enter BOSSOLA, L. 2 E.

Why art thou here?
Thy face is ghastly, and upon it sits
Some great determination, mix'd with fear.

Bos. [*Flashing out his sword.*] Thus it lightens into action.
I am come

To kill thee.

Card. Ha! help! guards!

Bos. Thou art deceived;
They are out of hearing.

[*Bos. seizes the Card. with left hand.*]

Card. Hold! I will divide
My revenues with thee, faithfully.

Bos. [*With scornful rage.*] Thy faith.

Card. [*Struggling, and grasping Bos.'s sword-arm.*] Shall I be slain like some dumb animal,
Without resistance! Help! help! Grisolan!
Prince Malatesta! Silvio!—
I call in vain—I bade them not to come—
A moment stay thy hand! I cannot cope
With thee—what dost demand?—ask anything.
Bos. Wash off the blood from these my hireling hands—
Bring back to life thy sister!

Card. She was murdered
By my brother's orders.

Bos. But by your design.
You set him to 't, and kept his mind ablaze
By constant promptings. When his fury spent
Itself in blood, then came remorse and madness
On him while thou retain'st thy damned wits
To compass safety, and devise new crimes.

Card. [*Wildly.*] Help there, I say! oh, could my curses tear
Your sleep asunder.

Bos. I would make your end
Like to your sister's torture. My revenge
Grows wilder by delay. So shall it send
The false duke after thee!

Card. [*Suddenly catching up the fallen sword of Ant., and rushing at Bos.*] Nay, not so fast!

[*They fight and struggle. The doors in the centre of the gallery above are burst open, and Ferd., with a haggard face, and half undressed, bursts out upon the gallery with his sword drawn.*]

Ferd. Th' alarum! ha, give me a fresh horse!
Rally the van guard, or the day is lost.

[*Rushing down and thrusting both at the Card. and Bos.*]
It was Marina's voice that called for help!
Now, my dead sister's murderers have at ye!
Yield! yield!

[*The Card. staggers backward to a chair, and sinks, dying. Bos., wounded, leans on his sword.*]

I know thee well! [*To Bos.*]

Bos. Now know me better!

[*Ferd. raises both arms aloft with mad scorn, and Bos. runs him through. Ferd. instantly seizes Bos. by the throat with both hands.*]

Ferd. [*Grasping him with ferocity.*] Thou art the man—
the man who sought for gold—
Found a deep pit-full—and who sat i' the dark,
Uptohis throat in riches! [*Casts Bos. from him, who falls heavily.*]

Enter hurriedly, MALATESTA and SILVIO, followed by two SERVANTS, with lights from the gallery, whence the three former descend—the Servants remain standing there with the lights; and enter below, at the same time, GRISOLAN, CASTRUCCIO, DELIO, PHYSICIAN, and ATTENDANTS, who raise Bossola. Ferdinand is supported by the Physician and two Attendants.

Mal. Who lies here?

Sil. The Cardinal!

Mal. But by whose hand fell he?

Ferd. [*Proudly.*] By the hand of the Prince of Darkness—
His brother's!

[*All make signs of dismay.*]

Mal. [*Approaching Bos.*] Who is this?

[*Bos. raises his head faintly.*]

Ferd. Do ye not know!

It is the man who by a strangler's cord,
Climbed up to highest honours of the state—
The rich and noble Count of Naldi!

Del. Bear him away—

[*Bos. d.es.*]

[*Looking off.*]

[*Voices off, L. 2 E.*]

Another victim of this dreadful night.

Mal. [*Looking off.*] I pray you, bear him hither!

[*Exeunt two Servs.*]

Phy. [*To Ferdinand.*] Will your grace
Come in, that I may bind your wounds.

Ferd. No! no!

My wounds are deep as the eternal sea,
And cannot be constrained. Let them flow on.

[*The body of Ant. is borne in by two Servants, and laid down in the middle of the stage.*]

Del. Antonio!

Mal. Dead?

Del. Alas, my lord, too surely.

Ferd. [*Bending forward.*] I must look closer at that sleeping man.

[*They assist him forward.*]

His face is paler than the waxen mould
My sister once did stare at through her tears;
And I do seem to breed strange memories
Of passion and of sorrow in my brain,
Where thunder lately echoed. [*He kneels beside the body.*]
Shifting mists
Thicken between us, poor Antonio—

A damp and heavy earth lies on our hearts—
The frost doth take our knees, so that I pray,

But cannot rise—my thoughts lose government,
And have no meaning—but stray all forlorn,
Seeking forgiveness—till some weeping ghost
Melts us into itself. Marina calls!

[*Taking Ant.'s hand.*]

[*He dies.*]

[*The curtain drops.*]